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THE FIRST STONE

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W.T. WASHBURN

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T. J.

THE FIRST STONE.

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The First Stone

AND OTHER STORIES

By W. T. WASHBURN

Author of *FAIR HARVARD, &c., &c.*

R. F. FENNO & COMPANY

9 AND 11 EAST 16TH ST. :: NEW YORK

— 1904 —

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The First Stone

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THE FIRST STONE.

THE FIRST STONE.

THE eyes of Abel Harris were riveted upon a diamond. There was nothing singular in this, for Mr. Harris had been a dealer in diamonds for many years, and was the owner of a larger number of costly gems than any other man or woman in the city of New York.

And yet there was something singular in the dealer's study, for his attention was far more taken up with the setting of the diamond than with the jewel itself.

Indeed so intent was he upon the mere environment of the gem that he could not have told whether the diamond was carbon or paste. Stranger still in a man in whose veins ran a crystal stream of the Brahmin blood of New England, he did not care.

The solution of all these riddles will be clear to the most prosaic mind when told that the setting of the jewel was the neck of the well known danseuse, Mlle. Judith.

As soon as the curtain fell upon the opera-glass of Mr. Harris, he rose, and leaving the parquet with some precipitation made his way behind the scenes. Arrived there he inserted his golden key into the door of the greenroom, and soon procured an introduction to the lady, who had made so malign an impression upon his business habits of thought.

To describe Mlle. Judith would be superfluous. Who has read the thousands of columns devoted to her praise, and has not discovered that she is a woman—or to be more minutely analytical, a French woman. At present her smile reflects the pleasure of the stage manager at seeing the well known millionaire Mr. Harris revisiting the glimpses of the footlights.

There is no city in the world that, as a rule, has so deep a contempt and hatred for men of genius as New York ; but there is one form of genius for which all Americans have the most profound reverence, and that is the genius for being a millionaire, and it must be confessed that foreigners, especially the better half of them, find little difficulty in conforming to our custom.

“You have a love for jewels?” said Mr. Harris, again fastening his eye upon the diamond on the neck of the danseuse.

"Yes, Monsieur, I have a grand passion for jewels, and jewelers and horses and dresses. In fact, I have all the vices except a love for women."

"It looks lovely," said the jeweler.

"It is lovely," replied the light-footed lady. "It is like its mistress," she added with a profound sigh, which, though intended to be melodramatic, gave one an impression of sincerity. "I must go," she continued, drawing the jewel from his hand, "unless," she added, "you will take my place in the ballet," and with that she flung a gauze scarf over his shoulders, and spinning round on the tops of her toes began instructing him in his new role.

"You will let me escort you home?" said Mr. Harris.

"To your home?" she asked, with an air of simplicity. "Oh fie! think of my reputation."

There was a burst of laughter at the sally, and Mlle. Judith ran towards the stage.

This was the danseuse's last dance for the evening, and on her return she found Mr. Harris waiting for her. The play, between the acts of which the ballet was sandwiched, bore the very popular title the "Rich Man's Poverty." Without stopping to learn the admirable moral of the piece, Mr. Harris persuaded the dan-

seuse, to the envy of many of her fellow artists, to allow him to drive her home. On reaching the front door of her apartment, however, the millionaire's feeling of security was greatly impaired ; for the danseuse, in the most ceremonious manner, shut the door in his face.

Mr. Harris prudently dismissed the hackman, and, as he turned to walk home, felt irritated, but half pleased at the difficult charms of his new friend.

"Stranger," said a voice at his side, "I'm an old Forty-niner; will you give me a light?"

Mr. Harris looked at the speaker with a suspicious glance.

The analysis of that single glance, and we mention this to give the reader some idea of the wonderful amount of condensed wisdom to be found in this story, would require several volumes, and indeed would be nothing less than the dissection of the whole society of the unknown city of New York. Let us pass this lightly by, and not inquire too closely even into the truth or falsehood of the idea which is deeply impressed upon the mind of every New York millionaire, that at least one half of the respectable inhabitants of that metropolis live upon the vices of the other half.

The person who had accosted Mr. Harris,

and who was clearly visible under the bright street lamp, was a man of sixty odd years of age, with a yellowish beard and moustache, a tawny coat, a slouch hat, and a briar-wood pipe pendant from his mouth : his eye was dull and unobservant, and his whole manner had that quiet, mysterious, penumbral and philosophic tone about it, which one often sees, but never without curiosity, among the experienced denizens of the Pacific Slope.

"This is not a ghoul," thought Mr. Harris, —a species of blackmailer well known to men of wealth. "Who the deuce is he?"

Replying to the man that he had no light, Mr. Harris, who prided himself upon having the legs of a reindeer, walked rapidly away. But what was his disgust to find the stranger, without making the slightest exertion, walking beside him, and asking him question after question of a character so simple that it almost seemed as though the old man had passed his life in a nunnery.

At length Mr. Harris, after walking several blocks out of his way, stopped before the door of his house puffing and blowing, and took out his key.

"Well!" said the stranger in a languid manner, as though he had just risen from his bed,

"is that your house? That beats me," and bidding Mr. Harris good night he gently evaporated.

"Who is that odd fish?" thought Mr. Harris, entering his house with a feeling of relief at finding that his wife had not sat up for him, and turning out the bug light in the hall.

Abel Harris was a man in whom a careless observer would have recognized the typical New England New Yorker, in whom, among other elements, the pious commercial instinct of the Pilgrim is mixed up with the devil-may-care love of pleasure of the Empire City clubman.

He owed his success in business to the honesty of his goods, the reputation for which soon enabled him to make a living profit: in addition to what might be called the bedrock increment of his profession (for so his branch of trade might be called), his customers gladly gave him an extra hundred per cent for his name, which was a guaranty against fraud. This addition, a mere trifle when we consider that he dealt in gems and jewels, had a growing tendency, as his trade spread over the world, to keep him above the fear of want.

It is not an uncommon spectacle among our best business men that their virtue takes on an objective rather than a subjective development.

This evil, which springs from the absence of the study of German metaphysics in our primary schools, where so many of our finest scholars end their education, will probably soon be done away with by a society soon to be formed for that purpose ; but meanwhile it must be confessed that Abel Harris has far more flaws and alloy in his character than in his goods and chattels.

It is impossible to prophesy what will be the outcome of a character with such an environment and heredity. What contradictions may it not exhibit, what cruel legacy from some revolutionary privateer, what craving inherited from his great-grand father, a respected West Indian merchant, as the good aristocrats of Boston call the ancient nobility who sold rum and molasses in that moral and intellectual center, what act of generosity or Christian self-sacrifice tracing its root to the life of some saintly clergyman, who poured out the chrysmal oil of his life upon the arid soil of some New England village. Who can guess?

The next morning Mr. Harris was in the office of his store, one of those superb museums to which at an expense of thousands of lives, every element has contributed whatever of choice and beautiful it has hidden away for centuries.

A fine-looking young man, his private secretary, had been sorting his letters for him. This secretary, whose name was Henry Baldwin, and who was the only son of a widowed mother, who idolized him, had been nicknamed "Clover" by his fellow clerks on account of his lack of all vices.

When Mr. Harris entered the office the handsome face of his secretary wore so clouded an expression that Mr. Harris noticed it.

"We have had fifty thousand dollars' orders canceled to-day by mail," said the secretary.

"Well, well," said Mr. Harris, "our goods will keep, and we owe nothing to speak of," and he began reading his letters. "These are hard times—a quarter of a million dollars of orders canceled to date."

Some one came in to tell him of a consignment of the famous jewels of the Duchess of Corti; a second visitor informed him that they had found a clue to a robbery of some moment; a third that a question raised by the Custom House had been decided in his favor. But Mr. Harris paid less attention than his secretary to what was said, so eloquent a picture thrust itself between him and the speakers. An oval face, bright eyes full of passion and coquetry, a lithe figure, slender waist, shapely arms, del-

icate hands and fingers stained with roses, lips, bust, features full of provoking charm, and proud vitality, a picture with the brow of Clytie, and the movement of Diana. Mr. Harris's long study of the masterpieces of art had given him, alas, too keen an eye for the beautiful, not to make this picture more vivid than his own conscience could approve.

Yet he could not but notice the look of growing anxiety upon the face of his secretary, for which a ready explanation offered itself in the financial cyclone which was then sweeping through the city. At another time the millionaire himself would have been equally anxious, not for fear of loss, for he had never subjected himself to the intermittent fever of promissory notes, a disease, like malaria, almost universal in this country, but from an ardent desire to reap a golden harvest from the ruin of his neighbors. But now he was thinking, not indeed of orange blossoms, but of roses, zephyrs, groves, Italian marbles, music, laces and all the confused imagery which Venus scatters from her rosy finger-tips over the hearts of the prosaic.

"Come, come, Baldwin, don't look so troubled," he said at length, as his secretary fetched a deep sigh. "We are safe enough ;

be a philosopher, and look with resignation on the misfortunes of your neighbors."

The secretary flushed, and turned again to his letter-book.

That afternoon Mr. Harris went to his barber's, and gave him the most positive instructions to cut off ten years from his age, to which M. Henri, with true Parisian politeness, replied, "Certainly ; ten years at the very least, Monsieur." Thus abridged, the young millionaire dined at his club, affixed a boutonnière on the lapel of his dress-coat, and soon after found himself by the side of Mlle. Judith.

And now, considering the age in which we live, when a thousand so-called realistic writers have got this pig of a world by the ear, and are calling all the upper and nether angels to witness that it is impossible to make a silk-purse out of it, one ought to state that there is not one word in this story, that would cast the slightest shadow on the purest dreams of Joseph or Sussanna.

The millionaire and the artiste again drove toward the latter's house. As they drew near, "Why," asked the jeweler, "did you close your door against me so cruelly last night?"

"You did not have any passport," replied the danseuse, with a look of simplicity.

"I thought as much," said her cavalier, and clapping his hand in his pocket he drew out a jewel case which he thrust into her curious hand.

"Ah, Monsieur," she exclaimed, on opening the box and catching sight of a necklace in which were set four brilliants full of snap and fire, "you are too good a locksmith to need a passport. What door would be deaf to such a key?"

They left the carriage, and she opened the door and let the jeweler into her reception room. The room was far from prudish in its appointments, and was furnished with all those provoking accessories with which female youth and beauty enhance their charms: soft cushions, rich tapestries, delicate laces, quaint ornaments, vases, statuettes, and over them all a faint perfume floating. The pictures did not show a great knowledge of art. The most conspicuous among them was a copy of Correggio's Magdalen. This would have given the room a religious tone, which it needed, had not the painter's versatility been so irrepressible, that the uninspired mind could not possibly tell whether the heroine of the picture was intended to represent the Virgin, Venus, or Phryne.

The danseuse excused herself a moment,

and ran into an alcove to change her dress, taking care to draw the curtains closely together. Like most danseuses or models, though she had no objection to appear on the stage in any character from Eve to Iphigenia, she would allow no one to see her in transition.

When she returned she was dressed becomingly and modestly.

Strangely enough, with her dress her manner had changed.

Some philosophers argue that in the moral as in the social world there is no difference between women except in their dress. Into this question we will not penetrate, but merely record the fact. Mlle. Judith was no longer the goddess of the footlights. The piquant audacity that had provoked admiration in the green-room was succeeded by a watchful reserve. Her eyes no longer had any promise of coquetry in them. But for her distinguished bearing, her face gave the impression of the reluctant beauty of a girl fresh from a convent. The danseuse, it was clear, was an artist.

Abel Harris was not greatly pleased at the change. Like many men of the American world he divided women into two orders of beings; the one honest, stupid and devoid of every attraction; the other wicked, and full

of forbidden charms ; slaves of women of the first class men revenged themselves by making the second class their victims. 'Tis a common but a crude analysis.

"Come," he said, approaching her, "you haven't spoken a word to me. What is hiding in this jewel box?" and he touched her forehead with his forefinger.

"It is very light, Monsieur," she said, with some earnestness. "You are more fortunate ; you have a wife to lighten your pocket and load your forehead—with ideas."

"Humph!" said Abel, not wholly pleased. "Will you let me light a cigar? You have not put on your necklace. Will you not let me see how it matches your style of beauty?"

He opened the jewel-box, which the girl had laid upon the table, and took out the glittering circle. As he did so he remembered how, ten years ago, he had made a similar present to his wife. The stones of the former present were as large as these, but in each of them was a hidden flaw. "Come, let me clasp it round your neck."

The girl hesitated ; curiosity, the mother of philosophy and all the other evils in the world spurred her to consent. Abel Harris unclasped the necklace and was fitting it around her neck,

when a faint sound seemed to permeate the room. One seemed not so much to hear as to feel it, mysterious and prescient, like that timorous tremor which, on the Pacific slope or at Manila, makes people leap in terror from bed or board and fly to the streets.

"What is that?" asked the jeweler, startled.

"It is only a string snapping," replied Mademoiselle, "my heart is growing too large for its gear."

Abel Harris fastened the clasp of the necklace, and, taking up a large silver-mounted hand-glass, with his left hand held it before the girl's face so that they could study the effect together.

It will hardly be credited by any man under forty-five that Abel Harris' first object of attention and approval—was his own head. Yes, the effective force of his remaining hair was still intact and greatly magnified by M. Henri through a strategy known only to himself: the barber with a genius kindred to but more praiseworthy than, that of Gustavus or Wellington, had broken up the phalanx and distributed the hairs after the high Roman style into thin lines.

"Alas!" he thought, "why cannot men buy new bodies?"

What rich man has not known the feeling that drives him by way of approximation to tailors, dressmakers, shoemakers, dentists and the hundred and one body cobblers that haunt a great city.

Mr. Harris held the glass in his left hand. This left his right hand unemployed, and subject to all the temptations to which idleness exposed it. To these it had no time, even if it had the wish, which we trust was not the case, to yield. For his second glance in the glass discovered three faces instead of two, and with an oath he dropped the glass upon the floor and turned angrily.

"Well, this beats me," said a languid and not unfamiliar voice: by which alone the jeweler might have recognized the impressive Forty-niner, who had taken so friendly an interest in him the night before.

"Where the deuce did you come from?" he exclaimed furiously.

"It's all right," said the Forty-niner; "it's all right, stranger," and he softly stroked his saffron beard with his left hand.

Now to stroke one's beard is the highest degree of excitement to which a Forty-niner ever rises when sober, but Abel Harris was not experienced enough to know it; though this ig-

norance did not result so fatally in his case as in many others.

"Where did you come from?" he exclaimed again. "What do you want? Who are you?"

"It's all right, stranger," replied the languid intruder. "I ain't this lady's husband: if she can stand it I can. You needn't stay; you may go," he continued, turning the thumb of his right hand towards the door.

This calm and dubious politeness of the Forty-niner acted upon the mind of Mr. Harris like sugar and oysters on the palate of an epicure.

"Go to the——; go home," he muttered, swallowing several oaths raw; "I have no intention of going."

"Well, then, stay," said the impartial and unbidden guest. "If you haven't got no reputation to lose, so much the better for you, or so much the worse; 'tis even all round: everything goes as it lays."

Now it was noticeable that Mademoiselle, during the debate, had not said a word. A better reader of strange characters than her admirer, the shadow of a malign power seemed to overlie her face: all the color left her lips and cheeks: only her keen eyes searched the face of the intruder; but project your glance as deep

as you could into his countenance and it returned without accretion or foreign image. And yet his face looked open enough, and larger than the truth, for he had not removed his broad brimmed felt hat, but merely thrust it on the back of his head.

"It's all right, friend," he said. "I made a little mistake last night, but it's all right now." And leaving off stroking his beard he thrust his left hand into his breast and drawing out a red pocket-handkerchief, began blowing his nose with vigor but without making any noise.

This act, which might have enlightened Harris as to the character of the intruder, for it is one of the favorite tests in the civil service examination for admission to his craft, lasted but a few seconds. Then like a flash the Forty-niner had rudely thrust the trembling girl aside, burst open the only closet door in the flat, and in a moment reappeared, bringing with him a fourth actor into this troubled drama.

It was like a bolt from the blue.

"Baldwin!" "Mr. Harris!" cried two voices at once

"Mr. Harris?" repeated a languid echo. "Well, takes me again: why, friend, I'm workin' up this case for you. And only last night I came within an ace of quodding you for robbing

yourself. It's all right now, pardner; there's the woman, and there's the man, and now where's the corpus?"

At these words, cold as a dissector's knife, for a few seconds the three hearers stood still without a breath. Abel's face first showed traces of conflicting emotions. Vice is the environment of crime; none the less is the pleasure seeker startled, when, wandering among the flowery paths of indulgence, to find himself face to face with the jailer or the hangman.

"Baldwin! Impossible!" he said slowly.

On the young man's face a look of strong despair seemed to have petrified.

"Do not tell my mother, I entreat you," he said suddenly, and the next moment he had snatched a pistol from the detective's hip-pocket—a struggle—a report—the officer had struck aside the weapon, and the prisoner stood unhurt and unarmed.

For a moment his eyes sought the face of his employer, of the man on whose silent lips lay the word of life or death, of pardon or infamy.

That face now wore the cold calm look of the righteous judge; it was the face of a man who had drunk deep of experience, and the wine of experience, with which the wise old

world fills our glass at forty-five, is not a generous liquor; indeed, there is more vinegar than wine in it, and no one except the dwellers along the banks of the Rhine can really enjoy it.

"Once a thief, always a thief," he muttered half audibly.

Suddenly the eyes of three of the actors in this drama were turned towards the fourth.

Judith, till now, had stood silent with blanched face, grasping the table with her hands, and slowly turning her eyes from the youth to the senior. Her hands, her neck, her face—all the impassioned and caressing charms of her harmonious figure, had changed to the coldness of marble. Above her superb animal beauty a soul seemed to rise, like the evanescent rainbow which forms above a surf-beaten rock. Like the classic masterpieces she looked no longer an object of desire, but of reverence: only her lips contracted; her eyes filled with tears and she gasped for breath. She seemed for the first time to recognize the masked tragedy that walks hand in hand with Pleasure and Sin along the hidden ways of life.

When she heard the sentences fall from the Judge's lips, the blood sprang eloquently to her lips, then a crimson wave rolled over her neck and face.

"Horrible!" she gasped, and the next moment had thrown herself at his feet. "God give me words," she cried. "Oh, forgive him! forgive him! for the sake of your mother, and of the first woman you loved. It is his first crime. He will repent. Oh, think how much evil you and yours have done in your life. Think how you sit before us night after night, while we are yet innocent, before us, whom Christ bids you treat as your sisters or your daughters, holding out to us all the wealth that a woman's heart desires, waiting and watching, till a moment of weakness or of vanity betrays us. Ah, we daughters of the stage know the wickedness of men. If he robbed you, he was mad with jealousy at the gold which you pour at our feet like water. Forgive him for the sake of his mother and your own. Do not break three hearts: take what I have: take—" She fell prone before the silent Judge, like a bird that dashes its life out against a head-light.

Fair, frail and loving mortality, what a tumult do you raise in men's veins and brains!

"Well, well, that takes me," said the Forty-niner, stroking his yellow beard, and, taking a piece of tobacco and a jack-knife from his pocket, while keeping a close eye upon the prisoner.

Then turning his thumb respectfully in the direction of the prostrate girl, whom Abel had raised from the floor, he added, with a trace of admiration, as he cut for himself a more generous quid than usual, "Pardner, she's no sleeper. She's a geyser she is. There she goes again."

The poor girl, on recovering from her swoon, still half conscious, began singing snatches from the Opera Bouffe, which in the deadly atmosphere sounded as dolorous as chanticleer crowing in a butcher's stall.

What passed then in Abel Harris' mind? Did the face of his mother, or the face of the girl, whom, when young and innocent, he had loved, and who had died in her virgin beauty, pass before him. Strange, no look, no word ever dies in the world: it sleeps, and wakes and passes on from soul to soul.

A deep sigh recalled him to the present: Judith had recovered and a look of anguish drew over her face. She rose quickly from the lounge, on which Abel had placed her, stripped herself of her jewels, and, running to her drawers, drew out what little store she had hidden there, and placed them all on the table.

"Take them," she said. "Thank you," she added, as she read her lover's pardon in the eyes of Mr. Harris.

"You're too good for him," he muttered savagely.

Then he illustrated his composite nature. He took the jewels he had given the girl, and picking out the diamond she had worn when he first saw her and two other stones.

"He gave you these?" he asked. She nodded.

He put the two larger ones in his pocket and presenting the other to the detective.

"Keep this," he said, "and say nothing to any one about this business."

The detective looked at the diamond with the coy skepticism with which a grocer in the Hebrew quarter regards a coin whose superscription had disappeared by abrasion.

"It's all right, pardner," he said softly. "I've no doubt it's all right, but I've given them air trinkets to girls, myself, and they're mighty onsertain things to them that's not in the business. Even if they go in diamonds, they're apt to come out glass."

"Go in where?" asked the jeweler, diverted.

"Go in where they all go in—into your uncle's, into the sweating room of the Knights of the Three Balls."

"True enough," said the jeweler, clapping the gem, which was of great value, into his own

pocket, and taking out what in the picturesque language of the Pacific Slope is termed a wad.

"Ah," said the detective, stroking his beard, "this looks more regular," and picking up the two hundred dollars which Mr. Harris gave him, he placed it carelessly in his vest pocket.

"Come," said Harris to the detective, "let us go."

He shook hands with the girl, who bent down to try and kiss his hand in gratitude.

"No, no," he said. "Good-bye."

The secretary sat with his face in his hands, from which he did not once raise it.

At the the door Abel turned and looked at the luckless pair, seated alone in the spectral isolation of crime. Judith was reaching out her hand to touch her lover, as though to see whether he were real, or whether they had been but actors in a dismal farce.

One must be very ignorant of the industry of journalists, or the generous spirit of good society, to suppose that this little tragi-comedy escaped the knowledge of the one or the ridicule of the other. How did it leak out? By a dozen pinholes. In the first place it is the rule of the Daniel Detective Agency, by whom our friend the Forty-niner was employed, that all emoluments go to the employer. Abel Harris

foolishly let it slip that he had paid his detective generously, and the result was an acrimonious personal debate between the Forty-niner and his employer. The former, who had been brought up in a freer atmosphere, took a very extensive and democratic view of the rights reserved to the individual, and, while actively engaged in spending the money in debate, took occasion to express his opinion freely of all adverse claimants to whom the mildest term which he applied was "Jumpers."

A short time after these events the writer mentioned to Mr. Harris that he was going to Southern California. He was not wholly surprised at being asked by the jeweler if he would look up a former secretary of his, a Mr. Baldwin, in whom he took an interest, and who had just settled near Los Angeles.

"The man," asked the writer, "who recently married that famous danseuse, to the great scandal of his family? I will bring you news of them both," said the writer, looking narrowly at his friend, who turned away, to find what, had he been twenty years younger, would have aspired to the name of a blush.

The first thing the writer did on arriving at Los Angeles was to seek out this strange pair. He found them living on a small fruit farm,

which they had purchased some ten miles from the city. The wife was vivacious, full of energy and business, and seemed to be devoted to her husband. He wore upon his face the fatal look of shame of a man who can never pardon himself, and whom the world can never pardon. In any other part of the world one would say, "He is a dead man."

But in the gardens that surrounded that Flora of cities there are so few conveniences for dying that he may live a thousand years. One noticed that his eye followed every motion of his wife with a tender and pathetic regard.

Will they continue in their virtuous course? Can a young woman of surpassing beauty, whose life has been far from blameless, forever renounce all the allurements of the world, the flesh, and the other member of that attractive but unworshipful trinity? Can a criminal, who has fallen, return to grace?

The mere suggestion of anything so improbable will, in the year of Our Lord 1904, cause many of our readers to regard this story as a romance. People would have thought differently eighteen hundred years ago, which shows what wonderful moral strides civilization has made. We do not wish to offend any more of our readers, or to make them falsely suspect

that they are reading anything but plain biographical history. We merely ask the question: we do not answer it.

'T is a lawyer's province to fathom the designs of providence: t 'is a minister's business to direct them: t 'is the historian's humbler duty to record their results.

"You did a generous act, Mr. Harris. You will not repent of it. So you made his wife a wedding present of their farm?"

"It was only twenty acres; I couldn't help it," he replied meekly.

"Some men, Mr. Harris, are made good against their will. After fifty——"

"Forty-five, if you please."

"After forty-five our vices have all abandoned us, and unless we coax back a few virtues——"

"Yes," said the millionaire sadly, "I have become, I will not say the home, but the hospital of the virtues. They have come back to me reluctantly, and many of them in a damaged condition, but they are all here."

MADAGASCAR.

I LEFT that graveyard, St. Mary's Isle, alive and well, and reached Tamatava on the first of September. The stories about Madagascar, with which the papers have been filled for two years past, are so garnished that plain facts written with a square-toed pen will be novel.

Newspapers are thought here to know how to work the obi; that is to practise the black art, but never to tell the truth. The French, who now are in possession of Tamatava, have long laid claim to the Great Britain of Africa, as Madagascar is often called. This title itself doubtless gives zest to the desire of the French to conquer it.

I passed but three days at Tamatava : on the second day I dined with a French Colonel, who feasted me on one of the delicacies of the island, a roasted civet cat. A burly English guest boasted of his powers of eating, and said that in England he had often eaten two dozen eggs for breakfast. M. Ribault, our

host, offered to make a wager with him that he couldn't eat one egg of the kind laid in Madagascar. It was agreed that the egg should be fresh and palatable, and only difficult from its size, and the Englishman eagerly accepted the wager. Our host then set before him the egg of the Madagascar ostrich, an egg seven times as large as that of the African ostrich, and one hundred and fifty times the size of our common egg.

The next morning Monsieur asked me to see a waterspout that would well repay a day's delay. This island it seems is a favorite promenade for waterspouts that wander about it in every direction from Cape Ambro to Cape St. Mary.

Just after dark Monsieur led me to a knoll, where a number of people were gathered.

"Look," he cried, after waiting half an hour, and pointing to the west. There, clear in the moonlight, I saw a small waterspout land on the threshold of a valley at the base of the hill, and stride along the natural pathway. When near us, it poised a moment over a huge hog's-head, and then the broad base of the inverted cone burst into a magnificent blaze. Every one applauded the wondrous sight. It was it seems the device of a French chemist, who noticed

that every evening a waterspout landed at the same spot and followed the same course.

He had placed a hogshead filled with petroleum at one point on its route, and connected it by a galvanic battery to the spot where we were standing. The waterspout sucked up the petroleum, and the electric spark fired the tail of the rising current of oil. The chemist's skill was shown in not lighting the electric spark before most of the oil had been sucked up, or too late when it had all left the barrel. The effect was brilliant. I would gladly have stopped longer at the French capital, but I was eager to pursue my studies in natural history, and so I pressed on towards the interior.

Sevandah, as the Arabs call Madagascar, is about 900 miles in length by 300 in breadth, and is properly divided by two concentric curves. Between the first line and the sea lie the low hot lands. This region is edged with bayous and lagoons, forming natural canals along the coast for hundreds of miles. The country between the two curves embraces the timber land; and the region within the second line is the broad treeless table-land of the interior with a mountain range for a backbone.

Tamatava, like all places on the coast, is haunted by a specter with which no one trifles, the Malagasy fever. As I left the front door of my house to begin my journey inland, I saw the fever coming in at the back.

Some miles west of Tamatava I came to the "Weeping Place of the Hovas," the spot from which the slaves of that race first beheld the sea. These heathens, strangely enough, looked upon Christians, who stole them away and sold them into slavery, as monsters, and thought that once across the ocean they would be eaten.

On this very spot I saw a young man, who took a piece of earth from his pocket, and gazed on it with so piteous a glance that I asked the cause. He told me, through my interpreter, that he had carried away a piece of his native land in his pocket and was gazing fondly at it; that he had no hope of ever revisiting his home, for he was a slave. To my further inquiry, he said that he had sold himself to save his father, who was a Matitane, from being strangled as a wizard. His face and story so impressed me that after some haggling I bought him from his Arab master for fifty dollars. I told him that he was free, but he threw himself at my feet and swore that he would be my slave as long as

he lived. I thus became a slaveholder in spite of myself ; a sad plight for an old abolitionist.

This young Hovan proved so apt at learning that in a few weeks he was of more service to me than my interpreter. The latter, indeed, already frightened at the dangers of our journey, had his home-sickness greatly encouraged by a scorpion that he had neglected to shake from his shoe. Its bite was not fatal, but left him weak, and meeting with a party of Arabs on their way to Tamatava, he asked my leave to go with them.

I stayed but a short time in the lowlands, though tempted to study the flowers and grasses that often spread in waves of crimson beauty as far as the eye could reach.

On passing into the timber belt I found besides many of our own trees, forests of bamboo, tamarind, and palm, with a number of unfamiliar small plants.

I had heard good accounts of the Betsileo, and they seemed a simple folk enough. In exchange for game they gave us rice, the bread of Madagascar, yams, wild figs, grapes and other products of the country.

One day when Abe, for I had named my Hovan Abe Lincoln, was away trying to knock over a brace of ducks, two natives asked me to

help bury a man of distinction in the tribe ; his family, they said, were so prostrated with grief that they could not fulfil this last duty. This, they told me, by signs, and I at once hastened to the place where the dead man lay. He was wrapped in bark, and lifting him up I carried him to a shallow grave. I was fitting him to his bed when I was interrupted by Abe, who, with a face of fury, tore the corpse from me, and poured a flood of abuse upon the natives near me. I was not long a silent witness, for turning to me Abe uttered one word, "Leper."

I was furious at the trick. Without reflection I ran to the house where their deities lived, and seizing a firebrand soon gave the rascals a sight of their gods in the inferno. But the growing numbers of naked rascals, for a score of them had gathered round us, added to the prayers of Abe, soon persuaded me to show my leg valor. Frightening them with our guns we retreated slowly till out of reach of their arrows, and then broke into a full run.

We advanced in a westerly direction, and our path lay partly under cover and partly in the open. We were well shod and our pursuers were barefoot. Abe now and then stopped to gather bunches of wild hog's spear (a prickly grass) which he placed over our footsteps, and

this gentle device gave a softened meaning to the yells behind us.

After running and walking a dozen miles, hearing no more sounds of pursuit, I felt secure but hungry. An exclamation from Abe put an end to the former feeling. In our very path lay a deep sluggish stream. What to do? Swim across it? As if in answer to our question the huge snout of a crocodile thrust itself above the deadly surface, Right or left? On this question might hang our lives.

"Look," said Abe, and pointed toward a large fish hawk to the west and right. It was clear that the stream curved away from us on the right, and we chose that course till a mile further on a new curve in the river made us lose sight of it altogether. We next came to a prairie in the forest, broken by ledges of rock. The ground was now red hot and we looked about for shelter from the noontide sun. Picking out a natural cave in the rocks with two entrances we lay down and held a durbah or council of war. Half dead with hunger, thirst and heat, and nothing to be done but wait. But we did not have to wait long; loud yells from a hundred mouths showed us that the Malagasy monsters in force were on our trail.

As we were about to retreat through the lee-

ward door of the cave, what should we see approaching us but two gigantic baboons each over seven feet high, armed with branches of trees.

I felt like a man who, turning to fly from a wolf at his front door, sees a tiger entering at the back. Preferring to die at the hands of our own race, we ran back and creeping for some distance thought we might put a patch of chaparral between us and our pursuers. But their yells of triumph showed that their sharp eyes had found us out. Spurring on we had almost resolved to stand and sell our lives for what they were worth, when suddenly the air grew less clear; the shadows deepened, and before many minutes the sky was covered with a black cloud that seemed alive with untold horrors. Soon noonday was as black as midnight. I had little doubt that a tropical tempest was about to break over our heads. At least I said we have had our choice of deaths to-day, crocodiles, spears, baboons, clubs, hunger, thirst, sunstroke, and now drowning is added. This is the paradise of suicides.

Abe, however, seemed less troubled than I at this new horror. Taking me by the hand, for he had the eye of a cat, he hurried me on. At length, after running some distance, he

stopped and said, "We must look out for supper."

At the word, he picked up half a dozen pebbles and throwing them into the cloud above us, to my surprise, brought down three flying foxes. Incredible as it may seem the storm cloud was nothing less than a countless host of these animals in their yearly migration.

An hour later found the sun shining, and the Malagasy baffled. We ate the foxes raw, fearing a smoke might betray us. The food only made us more thirsty. I was in despair of finding water, and regretted not having drunk the river mud, when Abe gave a shout and pointed to a tree, half palm, half plaintain.

He ran towards it, and seizing a stalk broke it off entire and placed the stem in my mouth. A draught of delicious water issued from it. I had before read of the "Traveler's Tree," but was half inclined to doubt the report. But nothing can be truer, and no tree better deserves its praise than this that carries a fountain of living water hidden under each leaf.

I now decided on making my best way to the Hovas, who were on good terms with the Anglo-Saxons, and so told Abe. Our compass and Abe's woodcraft would be good enough

guides. But the next morning we again struck the banks of the same river that had before turned our path aside.

How to get over it? Abé told me of a religious belief throughout the island, that crocodiles never devour the innocent.

But my fear that I might have some secret sin, if nothing else, had kept me from trusting to this belief. While I stood dividing my mind this way and that, Abe cried out, "Follow me," and ran up the stream to a spot where a wild dog was barking at his shadow in the water. Dozens of crocodiles from far and near were swimming round the place waiting for a dish of which, like our Indians, they are very fond.

The dog, I thought in my wisdom, was playing the part of a dinner bell and dinner at the same time. But after a furious barking, he suddenly darted into the brake and ran along the river-side.

"After him," cried Abe, and we soon found ourselves some two hundred yards up stream. There the dog, after looking narrowly about him, and seeing no signs of a crocodile, jumped into the river and swam as fast as he could. He was followed by Abe and myself, pushing before us a log laden with our guns.

The stream at this point was narrow and we

were all soon safe across. I could not but admire the genius of the dog, that turned the ravenous hunger of its enemies into a means of escape from it. As though the river was not wet enough scarcely had we set foot on the opposite shore when a heavy shower soaked us to the bone.

I should have made a poor shift alone, but Abe, finding some palms with leaves ten feet in length, quickly built a small hut. Then searching in the grass he found two large fire-flies, one of which he hung up as a lantern, and pinned the other on the ground as a stove. Their warmth soon made us as comfortable as fishes in a stewing pan.

We were, however, so tired that we at once fell fast asleep. We were awakened at day-break by having our ribs tickled with the point of a spear. I looked about me, and at first thought our assailants were Betsileo, and our minutes numbered.

I was reassured by Abe, who told me our captors were Sakalavas, and who at once demanded of them to be led before their chief.

This tribe, whose warriors, though lazy, are the tallest and finest in the island were fortunately then at peace with the Hovas. The natives, who seemed pleased at their pris-

oners, led us some miles to a large village, and presented us to their sovereign, who turned out to be a woman, a shapely creature of twenty summers or more.

This sub-queen was, it seems, a great personage, and boasted of having in her veins some of the blood of the pirates of St. Mary's, who were defeated early in the last century, and driven to take refuge on the main island.

She heard our story with interest, and gave orders that we should be kept as State prisoners. The next day the Queen herself came to visit me, and I learned the reason of our detention. She was going to marry me. In dismay I asked her if she were not already married. She answered with a loving smile that that need be no obstacle; that she would become a Christian, and to make way for me would murder her husband. As soon as she had retired I asked Abe what would be the consequence of my refusal of her offer. He replied with a look and a word that went to my heart.

"You will be—eaten."

"For heaven's sake, my friend, work the obi for all its worth," I cried, grasping Abe's hand. "Save me, and I will be your slave as long as I live."

Large tears rolled down Abe's cheeks, and I could see that my case was desperate. If she once became a widow I knew how little mercy was to be hoped for from a lady of that profession. The frightful logic of the woman! She was bound that we should become one by hook or crook. I would have tried to escape at once, but I had more confidence in Abe's judgment than my own.

That afternoon, as I was wandering about the village, spying narrowly its comings in and goings out, I chanced on a lane, down which a herd of cattle were being driven. Something stirred and uttered a plaintive cry just over the fence before me. An infant! The next moment I had sprung into the lane and was just in time to seize the babe and escape when the herd of cattle came trampling by. I carried it some distance, when I was overtaken by a crowd of angry natives, who assailed me with hand and club. I was saved from death by the timely appearance of Abe. He pulled me from beneath their blows. I still held on to the infant, and, after a long argument, persuaded them to let me go.

He then told me that I had broken one of their most sacred customs. The child had been born on an unlucky day, and its parents had

placed it in the lane to prove it. Had it escaped the hoofs of the cattle it would have regained its parents' love. He added that he feared I would be tried for witchcraft. I shrugged my shoulders: I was beginning to illustrate the old saying, there is but one way of entering this world, but there are a thousand ways of leaving it. As if to add to the force of this truth, that same day Abe told me that the village had just received a message that the boss chief of the Sakalavas was sick and that they must "purify the land."

The messenger brought with him a small bag on the end of a spear. This bag contained the dreaded tangena. Some one of this, as of every other Sakalava village, must take the poison to atone for the sins of the people and restore the great King to health. Abe told me that this was the only one of their religious mysteries into which strangers were admitted.

I soon learned that I had been selected as an acceptable offering to Tazo, the God of Fever, a compliment with which I was far from being pleased. Indeed, my Ebenezer was now up and for ten cents I would have kicked our planet itself into the sun before its time.

That evening Abe, with tears in his eyes, begged me to marry the Queen, whose power

might yet save me from the medicine men. But I hotly refused: by hotly I mean I consigned her and her tribe to the place where they belonged. Abe said he feared it was all over with us, but what he could do he would: I must be surprised at nothing in his conduct.

The next morning I was waited on by three natives of distinction, accompanied by Abe, who showed a horrible manner towards me. The three worthies told me that I was charged with witchcraft, and that to prove my innocence I must pluck three whiskers from the village cat. As I was following them to conform to their mummerly, somewhat relieved of my fears, Abe secretly placed a long package under my coat, and whispered to me to thrust it down the cat's throat.

I was led to a large building and pushed in: the next moment my simple undertaking had become serious. The cat, whose whiskers I was to pluck, was a tiger. With a huge yawn the overfed beast walked toward me. Abe's advice occurred to me. I pulled off the bark from the package and found inside a long cactus leaf covered with thorns. A chance for life! But how slim. The tiger came forward with jaws wide open: he did not seem hungry; but evidently wanted to sample me.

The tiger's mistake lay in trying to play the part of an animal of leisure. Business is business, and a tiger is no exception to its demands. It became aware of this the moment I had thrust the barbed cactus leaf half a yard down its throat. The effect was startling, the tiger could not have done better on the stage. Its evolutions, involutions, convolutions and revolutions would have made a politician envious.

I pulled out three hairs from my own head, and, when the three officials opened the door to remove the debris, I stepped out, and gave each of them a hair.

"Are you alive?" they asked. "And unhurt."

"Do you think I mind the scratch of a cat?" I answered.

Unfortunately my victory over the tiger only inflamed the passion of the Queen, who had been kept in ignorance of this attempt on my life. As I refused to share her village throne on her own or on any terms, she resolved in the depths of her savage mind to form an even more intimate relation with me than marriage. I was kept a close prisoner, and on the evening of the second day found myself stretched bound on the floor of the temple. The Queen and priests must have come to a

compromise. I was to be sacrificed to purify the village according to the sacred custom of the Tangena, and then I shuddered to think of what would follow! These priests entered the temple, and with them Abe, who it was clear, was playing a hard part. His face showed but little hope, and he evidently knew that a tiger is a mild animal compared to a woman scorned.

As I was looking about me eagerly, a slave brought in what looked like a pair of birds. Am I to be dealt with alive as the Parsees of Bengal deal with their dead, and am I to be devoured by vultures? But a closer glance showed me that what I took for birds were in reality the gigantic mosquito of Madagascar, which grows to the size of a large crane. The suction pipe of one these mosquitoes was placed on my great toe. The truth flashed across me. They eat their "meat" blooded like veal here; the poor Queen can't stand the sight of blood.

It is all very well for persons at a distance to laugh over missionaries being eaten, but these witty persons would find that their jests lost all their point as they themselves approached the table. The next moment I felt as though a well had been sunk in me. Every pump the mosquito made seemed to draw from me a

quart of blood. I gave myself up for dead, and was mechanically feeling in my pocket for a cent to ferry me over the Styx, when I saw Abe secretly slip a cork up the proboscis of the mosquito. Faithful soul, may heaven bless you !

The lights in the temple were dim, and the mosquito was soon carried away, apparently gorged. Abe played the same trick upon the second. I lay lifeless, and was soon pronounced ready for Her Majesty's plate.

Left alone with only one priest to watch and fan me for three or four hours I held my breath and remained motionless. I could feel the old cannibal's eyes devouring me; he doubtless expected a titbit for his trouble. But the hardest part of my trial began, when the old priest, unable to restrain his appetite began nibbling at my calves. To endure this and show no signs of life was indeed a strain on the nerves. I was on the point of screaming with pain when I heard a light step: back sprang my cords; my rifle was in my hands, and Abe stood beside me armed. I jumped up, seized the old cannibal priest by the hair, rammed, jammed, and crammed my fists down his throat and beat and banged him till he had not a tooth left in his head.

His screams brought a crowd around us. I

felt like a madman, and rushed forth shouting, "I am My Lord Tazo" (the dreaded pestilence), followed by Abe, firing at the rascals as we went. Yelling with terror, the whole village fled pell-mell, helter-skelter, mad-foot, break-neck, fly-away Jack, fly-away Gill, the devil take the hindmost, and in fifty other crazy ways at once.

I should have killed the Queen if I had found her, but she had fled. My only revenge was to burn her palace. As this contained a straw bonnet, a bustle, a hooped skirt and her few other insignia of royalty, I have no doubt that in their destruction she suffered an agony worse than death.

It will be thought quixotic, but I next made my way into the house where the infant I had rescued was lying. The little thing had been abandoned by its parents and was crying on the floor. I picked it up, and bidding Abe secure a she-goat the four of us took up our line of march for Antanarivo, the capital of the less savage Hovas.

After traveling a fortnight due north the forest began to grow sparse. The chatter of the monkeys, and the brilliant feathers of the parrots grew less familiar. A week later and we had reached the edge of the high table-

land that forms the center of the island. This region resembles in many points some of our western plateaux. There are no trees except a few fig-trees ; the grass cures itself early, and the universal gray color gives to the landscape something of the poetry of desolation. The air is dry and healthy ; the soil light and not barren, and the temperature rarely rises above 80.

One morning on our journey a row of heads stuck on bamboo poles showed us that we were nearing a place of high civilization : a turn in the road brought us in sight of a town of two thousand inhabitants or more, named Manarivo. We asked a rustic, who was carrying a load of manure, the chief fuel in use in Anhova, whose the heads were, and learned that they were banditti.

At this town we had a good dinner of three or four dishes of rice, yams, fruits and roast pig.

I here found an orphan, the boy of one of the banditti, that was so round that he could be rolled from one end of the room to the other. Our own baby was now so thin that it rattled whenever it moved. Wishing to average babies I bought the fat one for a few pennies : indeed, I could have had it for nothing.

From Manarivo to the capital is but a week's journey, and we can ride ox-back or hire palanquins all along the route. We moved on by easy stages. I was surprised to find so many Christian churches. Converting or perverting the country Abe said was a simple matter. As in England you had but to convert or pervert the sovereign, and every one followed. To-day under a Christian King all the churches are crowded ; to-morrow under a pagan King not a soul is to be seen in one of them.

We reached the capital without adventures. After some ceremony, I was introduced to the Hovan King, as a great American traveler. He seemed an intelligent man, and, had Paine's Age of Reason lying on the table. He had heard Paine was an American, asked me if I knew him, and how he was faring at present. I answered as closely as I could, and he then said he hoped I would attend church with him in the morning, and afterwards go with the royal family to see a bull-fight.

I was flattered at his politeness, and begged to show his children two curiosities, a rattle that rattled itself, and a ball that rolled itself. With that Abe brought in our two babies, who furnished the royal family with no end of sport. His generous Majesty offered me the title of

Prince if I would give them to him. But I had other plans for them, intending to take them on a lecture tour in my own country.

I returned to my inn an object of great envy, and for a week had my fill of pleasure. But fortune never seemed able to walk a chalk line with me long; and on the second week every one gave me the cold shoulder. I asked Abe what it meant, and he said some one had spread the rumor that I was a wicked wizard; and had caused the drought from which the country was suffering; a strange charge, for I had arrived long after the drought had begun. The penalty for my crime was crucifixion, impalement, or to be buried alive: the accused could take his choice.

The following morning I picked up before my door a hollow stone filled with hedgehog's bristles, bits of centipedes, scorpions, and other oddities. I showed this to Abe, and was pained to see the look of hopeless grief that came over the honest fellow's face.

"It is the deathstone, Master," he said, with a choking voice. "Nothing can save you: all I can do is to die with you."

"Talk of something else," I said angrily, "while we have breath in our bodies we will not think of dying."

With that I began pricking up my brains, that indeed needed no other spur.

"Come, Abe," I said. "Cure a dog with the hair that bit him ; follow me."

I led him straight to the King's palace, and asked for an audience, which, after some delay, was granted. I told the King that I was a great magician ; at which he turned pale.

"Yes," I said, "I am the King of Wizards : I work the obi like a major : with a word I can blot out the sun : with two I can transport you and your court to mid-ocean." The King almost tumbled off his throne from fright at these words. "But, King," I continued, "you have treated me like a friend and a brother, is it not so ?"

"Yes," faltered the King.

"You lie, Your Majesty," I answered. "You cannot deceive the King of the Wizards. You are plotting my death : but I will not punish you for you have been the victim of foolish councilors."

"They shall all lose their heads," cried the trembling King.

"Wait," I said, "till I have proved my power. I will put an end to this drought that is destroying your kingdom."

The king thanked me humbly. The next

morning orders were given for every man weighing over two hundred and fifty pounds to meet in the royal grounds. Three or four thousand men gathered there, and at a given signal were all made to dance the tarantella, or crazy dance, an order which was enforced by regiments of black rascals with long whips. For five hours under the broiling sun the host of fat men danced themselves lean. Huge clouds of perspiration soon gathered above our heads, and at the ninth minute of the sixth hour it began to rain heavily. Not a man of them but had contributed fifty pounds of steam to the public weal.

The grateful King offered to make me his Prime Minister, but the only reward I asked was that he should spare the lives of the other weather prophets, and convey us to the coast by the shortest route. He took leave of us with tears, and forced on my finger a diamond ring worth a million or two dollars.

A week later found us on board an English steamer on our way to Liverpool and New York.

PERPLEXED.

THERESA HAYWARD left the ladies' room of the Half Moon Assembly rooms and was joined by her uncle, who escorted her to the great hall. They were the guests of Mrs. Langdon, whose masked ball was to bring the present season to a brilliant close. Theresa appeared in the guise of an Arabian lady of rank, with gold-spangled tunic, jeweled miter, and an indolent wealth of embroidery, lace and flowers. Her wide sleeves did not conceal her molded arms, whose whiteness contrasted with her dark eyes, and with the waves of her chestnut hair, which were rich with half hidden pearls. Her costume, though not wholly consistent with a tall figure, firm step and assured carriage, was a miracle of beauty if not of correctness.

"You can introduce me, uncle," she said, "then your task will be ended, if you wish."

So saying, she led her uncle through the throng of attractive and bizarre characters, with which the ball-room was rapidly filling.

"That is he," she said presently. "And that

is she," she added to herself in no friendly tone, as her glance rested upon a couple conversing together under a grotesque statue of Diana, which stood in a corner of the room ; a warning to artists and lovers. The gentleman wore the difficult costume of a Marquis of the time of Louis XIV, and the lady, who was less tall than Theresa, was dressed like a Spanish donna, except that her skirt was caught high on the left side by a clasp of turquoises, and running along the side of her petticoat blossomed strings of roses.

"Waltz with me, uncle, please," said Theresa, and soon floating lightly upon waves of music she approached the conspicuous figures who had attracted her notice.

"What a lovely dancer!" "How graceful!" "Who can she be?" were the flattering whispers which greeted her. No sooner had she passed, than half a score or more of ambitious gallants crowded about her to beg her to waltz with them. She refused them, and continued dancing with her uncle, till at one of her pauses the Marquis with a show of reluctance, left his Spanish partner, and asked Theresa for a dance. Theresa allowed herself to be persuaded, and, with her new partner, who seemed avaricious of the honor, was soon the center of admiring

eyes. But there was no admiration in the glance of the Spanish lady, whom the Marquis had deserted, and whose jealous anger seemed impatient of the restraints of etiquette.

"Why does not your friend dance?" asked Theresa maliciously.

"She has no ear."

"How fortunate she is," said Theresa. "Of how many flatteries and lies she is saved the hearing!"

"You could afford to be less critical," said the Marquis, "for I never danced with one who seemed so like the embodied echo of music."

"Why will you flatter me, Monsieur?"

"One cannot flatter the Graces."

"Are they not women?"

"You know of what sex you are," said the Marquis. "Why does the music stop? I wish the waltz would flow on forever."

"What would Madame think?"

The Marquis made a gesture of impatience.

"She would think of her husband, as in duty bound. You promise me another dance?"

"Perhaps!"

"One can trust a woman's 'perhaps' better than her promise," said the courtier, who could not resist the temptation of making an epigram even at the cost of telling the truth. The

Marquis escorted Theresa to her uncle, and returned to the Spanish lady, whose glances showed that she had been deeply offended.

"Why do you take life so seriously, Theresa?" said her uncle kindly. "This scene, this music makes me young again, or will after a glass of champagne. I hope the supper will begin early," and the veteran sighed to think that all temptations but one had deserted him.

Again, the triple-time music lent its motion to the floor, and soon Theresa and the Marquis were gliding through the changing passages of the living labyrinth. The Marquis made many efforts to engage his companion in conversation, but Theresa only answered in satiric monosyllables.

"You are from England," said he at length.

"Why?"

"There only," he said, "would Circe think of going to Xantippe to school. This little hand," and he glanced flatteringly at the girl's tapering fingers, "if it could, would speak more kindly than another of your members; it would say something as well turned and graceful as itself."

"It would speak daggers," she said.

"You dance as eloquently as the daughter of Herodias," whispered the Marquis. "I hope

you will be content with having turned my head?"

"I fear," said Theresa, "that with your head on it, Herod's charger would still be empty."

"With my head, perhaps," sighed the Marquis, "but not if it held my heart."

"What would Madame say to that?"

"Madame! There is no Madame," he answered with too great eagerness.

"Who then is that Spanish lady, whose eyes follow us so eagerly?"

"She is my grandmother; that ought to satisfy you."

"Me and her?"

"She is hard to satisfy."

"You are soon tired."

The Marquis shrugged his shoulders, and Theresa said nothing more. But though she made no use of a woman's chief lure, she threw over the Marquis all the fascination a magnetic woman exerts. Piqued and charmed alike he tried to penetrate her disguise; his own name and address he volunteered.

"Both false," said Theresa.

"How do you know?"

"I am a clairvoyant."

"You are too truthful to remain incognita."

I will follow you to the Castle of Beauty, and will discover who you are."

"And then?"

"Then I will not forget.

"You have trifled with too many women not to forget."

"Then it is time to stop trifling."

The evening sped merrily on; again Theresa danced with the Marquis, but before the ball had well begun bade him good-night.

"Give me a memento of to-night's pleasure and to-morrow's hope," he pleaded, and drawing a ring from his finger begged her to exchange it for one of her own. She glanced at the initials.

"I will return it to-morrow," she said.

"Will you not give me some clue by which I can trace you?" he asked.

"A true lover needs no clue," she said sadly.

They had drawn near the lady whom the Marquis had neglected. Her right hand had closed so tightly that the back of her glove had burst open.

Theresa took her uncle's arm, and withdrew from the ball-room, a moment pausing to look with vacant eyes at the scene before them. Whatever of distinction, of beauty or magnificence our city boasts had gathered in the

brilliant hall. Over the animated throng flowers, gems, and perfumes had been scattered with spendthrift hand. Above, the walls garlanded with roses and orchids turned winter into June. Below, it was a nimble ray of light that could escape capture by diamond or ruby.

As she looked, Theresa sighed. Alas ! why is it that a sad underthought, like a dark thread in a cloth of gold, saps the pleasure excited by sights and sounds of beauty ? Does the shadow of death follow life's every motion, and the fuller the life the deeper the shadow ?

As Theresa looked upon the familiar scene of enchantment she felt for the first time that life was no longer only a picture.

"Uncle," she said, as they were driving away, "my cousin's suspicions were true. Randolph is still in that woman's toils. He has been engaged to my cousin but a fortnight, and he forgets her for another."

"He seemed to be attentive to you," said her uncle.

"I told my cousin I would find out about him. Some one wrote to her," said Theresa. "He thought she was in Washington. I am sorry I promised her."

"Humph ! It was not a nice role !" he muttered ; his sense of honor, naturally keen,

had been quickened in this respect by two marriages.

"It will end her life," said Theresa. "She dotes on him; no wonder; he is wonderfully attractive. It will kill her."

"By heaven!" said her uncle, "it will kill us all. The brute is drunk; he is whipping your horses; I told you to discharge him."

The coach, which was on runners, as he spoke, gave a sudden leap and raced forward. It was death to jump out. Theresa gave one scream, and sat down on the bottom of the carriage.

"We are heading straight for the river; it is not a dry ending," muttered the old soldier to himself, watching his niece to shield her if possible, and without a moment's warning calmly facing the doubtful issue of life and death like a gentleman of proof.

Suddenly there was a sound of some one clambering over the back of the coach; a few angry words on the box; the coach shook to and fro; then Theresa shot forward, and everything was a blank. She soon came to herself and found that neither her uncle nor herself were injured. They sprang from the coach door. The horses were lying in the snow, a policeman sitting on the head of each; the drunken coachman lay on the sidewalk with

the usual fortune of the sons of Bacchus ; beside him lay Theresa's recent partner ; his mask gone ; his face white as the snow, which contrasted with his crimson dress and the dark stream that oozed from his side.

"He saved your life, Miss," said an officer. "He was hanging on behind the carriage ; he climbed over the back like a cat, and had the horses down in a minute ; he must have been kicked by the nigh horse—he's a brave one."

A bell rang ; an ambulance drove up ; Randolph was placed in it, and driven to Harvey Hospital. After an hour of suspense the doctors pronounced the wound not dangerous, and Theresa drove home with her uncle. The poor girl could not sleep ; this way and that she was hurried by a conflict of feelings.

How could she betray Randolph's treachery to her cousin ? Had he not saved her life at the risk of his own ? How could she, unblamed, tell her cousin a tissue of lies, especially lies which were sure to be found out ?

How could she ever pardon herself, not for playing the detective, for alas, she was a woman, but for the fact that this faithless monster, whom she had designed to expose, had won her own heart ? Who shall advise her ?

THE JAUNDICE.

WHEN I joined the Army of the Potomac I was scarcely more than a lad, small of stature, and without a hair on lip or chin. The men called me "Miss Nancy," to which they were polite enough presently to prefix the epithet "Fighting," from my prowess, not in the field, but in the barracks.

At Yorktown, as every one knows, we were delayed a month by the skill of Magruder. Then after the battle of Fair Oaks we lay still in the Chickahominy Swamp, with an army half our size between us and Richmond, waiting for Lee to play "double or quits."

At the battle of Gaines' Mills our regiment, the Zouaves, was posted on the left of Porter's line of battle. It was the first fight I was ever in, and one of the worst fights any one was ever in.

Lee had concentrated his whole army against Porter's command, which was north of the Chickahominy, and the rebels were two to one.

There was no one but General Magruder, with a few drums and fifes, between McClellan's main army and Richmond, and Little Mac was waiting for reinforcements before attacking him.

Our line of battle was a semicircle with both wings on the Chickahominy. About two o'clock the enemy made their first attack. I saw the death-laden wave of fire before me and shut my eyes, expecting nothing less than to open them in heaven. My fears, however, were unfounded, and it was not without satisfaction that I perceived that the rebels' chief efforts were aiming at our right and center, where it was rumored Jackson's "foot cavalry" were picking their way through the swamps.

An hour or more before sunset I was struck by a ball, which stretched me upon the ground. I had little doubt but that my appointed moment had come, and lost no time in consigning the rebels to the Inferno and myself to paradise.

There was then a lull in the battle, and my comrades carried me from the field to a sheltered nest in a thicket near by, and spread a blanket under me. For four days and nights I had scarcely slept a wink; my wound was not painful, and I soon sank into a stupor.

When I awoke the dawn was just gilding the horizon. I soon recalled the events that had befallen me and my fatal wound. I moved my right arm; it was not there: I moved my left arm; it was not there. I moved my legs, and felt my trunk over. Then I said to myself, "Who can measure results? The shot that killed me has saved my life. Of a truth the lives of the brave are only saved by means of spent balls.

I asked myself how it had fared with the great army. And my mind misgave me that we had been defeated. I crept from my bramble hole, and looking about me saw from the trend of the wreckage of the battle that I was right. Forgetting my own evil case in the general disaster, I wept.

But now hunger and thirst constrained me, and reflecting, I thought that I must have slept through an entire day, for there were no dead in sight.

The sun was now winking through the trees, and if I wished to avoid capture I must resort to stratagem. So I looked about me, and in further proof of our defeat, found here a gray sleeve, and there the fragment of a gray coat.

I discarded my uniform and painted myself gray, for my dress could hardly be called any-

thing more pronounced. But I kept my pocketbook. Then taking my penknife I made a small puncture in my belt, and began to search for somebody with something to eat.

Before I had gone far I fell in with a rebel, who bade me sit down and wait for a cart, and I soon found myself in the rebel hospital.

An ambitious young doctor from Richmond at once examined my wound. He tried not to look serious, but told me he must probe for the ball at once, or he would not give a fig for my life.

"No wonder," I thought to myself, "that more soldiers die in the hospital than on the field."

I told the doctor that I would not let him stick his cheese-tester into me; that I preferred to die in the natural way.

"Where do you come from?" he asked.

"Texas," I replied.

"Oh!" said he, "if you come from Texas you're all right, but I pity the bullet."

In a few days I learned of McClellan's retreat, and then came news of the attack on our flanks, and the battle of Malvern Hill.

A new suit of clothes was given me at the hospital, and one night I slipped away, and thinking my safest route lay north I pointed

my course towards Washington. As ill luck would have it, whether from the water or malaria I know not, I had an attack of the jaundice when at the hospital, which made me as yellow as a pumpkin.

I lived mainly on what fruit and vegetables I could steal from the farms, and on what I could buy or rather beg from the negroes. For a negro, as soon as he suspected I was a Union soldier, which he generally did, would never take pay.

I was occasionally obliged to talk with whites. I made my way five days and nights, and passed the North Anna River. I found myself in the region of the streams named each after one of the syllables of the Mattapony. After passing the North Anna River the country was beautifully undulating, and the river bottoms full of rich plantations.

A sense of security, born from the easy prosperity about me, now possessed me, and one day I incautiously fell in conversation with an old farmer on the highway. In the course of it I spoke with regret of having had a bad attack of the jaundice. The old fellow looked at me sharply, and said :

“You must be a Yankee ; they rather like the jaundice in these parts.”

I saw my error, and hastened to leave the highway, and put as long a distance between us as possible.

"What a patriotic State this is," I said testily, "where one cannot even complain of a disease which you catch in it without being called a traitor."

It was well for me that I had left the highway, for the next negro, of whom I asked food, told me that there was a Yankee spy in the neighborhood, and that if they caught him they would hang him.

"Must I be hanged?" I thought, "because I have spoken ill of the jaundice? Who knows what shall befall me? I but avoid one calamity to fall into a worse."

In my despair I begged the negro, who, I saw, suspected me, to conceal me. It was no slight request to make, for discovery meant death to him. But the negro at once brought me to his hut, placed "crows" around it to warn us, and spread hoe cake and stolen dishes before me. At night he led me to an island in a swamp a mile distant, where I slept soundly, for I felt that I was not without friends.

The next day he took me again to his hut, and at sunset an old mulatto woman visited us. When she saw me her face, which had been

troubled, lit up with pleasure. She clapped her hands, and said, "Come with me."

I hesitated, but my host said that she was a friend, and I then followed her without fear. She led me continuously by the rear of the old plantation house into the presence of a lady, whose handsome face wore an expression of fear.

"This is he," said the old woman.

Her mistress, for such I saw the lady was, as soon as she heard this ran up to me, and kneeling at my feet pressed my hand in hers and exclaimed:

"You will save us?"

"Certainly," I replied, raising her, though the situation was the reverse of what I had expected, and, for a man who is drowning to be asked to rescue an indefinite number of persons from destruction might be a strain on the friendly relations of all parties.

But to be loved strengthens the heart, and, as I looked at the lovely woman I had no doubt that she had suddenly fallen in love with me.

"I am married," she said, and turned to the mulatto nurse, who at once began to divide the painful fact into details.

Martha Fairfax, the lady's name, was the

only child of a rich old Tidewater Virginian. She had been educated at the north, and, on her return home, she had fallen in love and secretly married an octoroon, whom her father had bought. This octoroon his master had educated, and intended to set free, but he had been prevented from doing so by sudden bankruptcy, and the octoroon had been sold as one of the assets of the estate.

The octoroon had become a house servant of the Fairfaxes, and had on two occasions saved the girl's life. In face and figure he was one of the handsomest men I ever saw. His wife had just arranged to secure his escape north in her company, when the war broke out, and made it next to impossible to slip through the lines.

Her father had been away from home for six months, part of the time with Jackson, but might now return at any moment. The danger of discovery, which had before been great, had recently been increased tenfold. She had a child.

Among Southern families of position there is no greater crime than for a lady to marry a man with a drop of negro blood in his veins. Discovery meant death to her child, vivi-cremation to her husband, and untold evil to herself.

Her husband refused to leave her. The child, whose existence had so far been concealed by the old nurse, might betray its existence at any moment. So momentous a secret she dared not entrust to any other of her slaves.

But what cannot a woman's wit compass?

At sight of my young jaundiced face the mulatto nurse had had an inspiration.

The beautiful lady knelt to me, not as I for a moment fondly thought to beg me to be her husband, but to beg me to become a woman and marry her husband.

Who could refuse so reasonable a request, especially if it saved him from the gallows?

But what a sudden change ! To-day a man ; to-morrow a woman, and a mother !

But for this change, however, I should certainly be caught. And I preferred to live in the shade as Mrs. Washington Davis, than to swing as Daniel Morgan.

As it was I had a narrow squeak of it, and but for my jaundice should have been detected.

Who, I thought, can measure results ? Who would have supposed that I should owe my life to the jaundice ?

After three months the real wife's father died. She at once sold all her slaves for what they

would bring, except her husband, her old nurse, myself, and the negro, who had saved me. The lady's love for the negro, though deep, was not broad. A month later we all escaped north.

THE BOSS.

ONE Sunday morning I was ushered into a pew in the "Eelpot." At the other end sat a plainly dressed girl, to whom I presently handed a hymn book. The face, which she turned toward me, was so comely that I was eager to make her acquaintance.

A tailor is rarely at a loss for an expedient, and picking up a glove that lay by her side—I always carry a thread and needle in my pocket—I slyly sewed up a hole in its forefinger.

"A breaker of hearts," I then wrote in a hymn book, "is rarely a mender of gloves."

On reading this the girl's brows contracted, but when I looked at her again I saw blushes snuggling in her dimples.

"It is better," I then wrote, "never to have seen the morning-star than to see it but once."

When I glanced at her a third time, her hazel eyes were full of laughter.

"After class," I said boldly, "I wish to make your acquaintance, for, if I delay, I fear you

may never return, and I shall lose my luck. Do not be angry," for the girl hesitated "I am in good standing in the church."

"And in good sitting, I hope, in your trade," she replied tartly, "for I see that you are a tailor."

"I indeed belong to the craft of the 'Cross-Legged,' or, as they are termed more truly 'The Thinkers,' for no professional man, not even the shoemaker, who thinks under the hammer——"

"Nonsense! to call yourself a professional man! my own father was a lawyer."

As the girl spoke, her eyes filled with tears.

"A lawyer compare with a tailor!" I thought; but said softly, "Your loss must be still recent; you are fortunate to have known a father's love so long. My own father died in China many years ago. I am now in mourning for my brother, who this summer fell down the shaft of a colliery."

"You have guessed rightly," said the girl sadly. "I am an orphan."

Without more debate, I escorted Joan, the girl would give me no other real name, to a room in a tenement house in Bleecker Street. Here she supported herself by painting brass plates or plaques, and gave as a reason for con-

cealing her name that she had quarreled with her relatives, and wished to live alone.

After a few visits, finding her as modest and industrious as she was charming, my fancy took root, and I asked her to marry me. Joan answered yes nor no, but went with me every Sunday to the "Eelpot."

Now two wicked sons of pious fathers often went to this church to *prey*. One of these, Spud Samson, was a coal dealer; the other, Loud Livingston, was a jobber in teas. These rogues got introduced to Joan, and soon patched up excuses to call upon her.

One day on nearing her door, I heard her angrily telling Loud Livingston not to be rude. I opened the door and found him on one side of a large table, and Joan on the other, watching him with kindling eyes. Joan smiled on seeing me, and soon the merchant, with a malignant side glance at us, sneaked from the room.

"Joan," I then said tenderly, "beauty without a protector is like a stray needle without a thread. It is more apt to hurt than help you. Give me a husband's right——"

As I was speaking an officer entered the room with a warrant for my arrest, and presently thrusting his hand into my overcoat pocket

drew out Livingston's watch and chain. He at once hurried me to court and to prison, where I had but a short time to wait for trial. The case was clear, for my accuser was a man of wealth, but the Judge pitied my youth and only sent me up for two months.

When I came out of prison, I changed my name, and, finding no cloth for my needle, entered the service of two bachelor brothers, David and Ezekiel Murphy, one an importer of teas: the other the Janitor of a mammoth pile of law offices, called "The Code." I tried hard to find Joan, but could only learn that she was last seen in a coach with Spud Samson. My faith in her did not fail, but my heart was heavy when I returned to my work.

One day I heard David say to his brother; "Loud Livingston sends me word that the teas I sold him are not up to sample, the liar! He wants twenty per cent off. Arnold tells me to sue the bill. If I lose that forty thousand dollars I am ruined."

"Heaven mend Arnold's wits!" I thought, and calling David aside, "Mr. Murphy, I said, "I am familiar with the tricks of the tea-merchants; for my father was, for many years, at Canton; and I know the very lining of Loud Livingston's heart. In good times he makes

money by bulling himself and extending his credit. In dull times he bears himself and makes a fortune out of his own wreck. Take my advice: go to him: haggle over the account: at last say: 'Mr. Livingston, you are one of our best customers; we want your business; rather than lose it we will concede anything in conscience: we will throw off eighteen per cent.' He will pay this bill, order another three times as large, and defer his bankruptcy for six months."

David did as I advised; Livingston paid the bill, and the next week ordered a hundred thousand dollars worth of teas. David sent him an empty tea chest, and the joke coming to the ear of the exchanges Livingston's system lost its savor. Money and credit gone, he soon became a boarder at free lunches, and a pensioner of heeltaps.

Soon after I heard Ezekiel say to David: "This winter I have lost by every venture; and half of my tenants have beaten me out of my rent. But for my coal bill to Spud Samson I could pull through: that comes to over ten thousand dollars. I have seen lawyer Coolidge, and he advises me to make an assignment."

"Heaven help us!" I thought, "a tailor's goose hides more wit than a lawyer's noddle."

"Mr. Murphy," I said, calling Ezekiel aside, "I am familiar with the tricks of the coal dealers, for my brother was for many years in that business; and I know Spud Samson's heart as well as I know that coal is comparatively white. Take my advice: borrow a thousand dollars, and pay it to him on account. Then order more coal, and weigh each ton as you receive it before witnesses. He will give you short measure, as he has done for ten years. With your evidence he will not dare sue you for a dollar, for the exposure of the fraud will hurt his credit more than the whole amount of the bill."

Ezekiel did as I advised: the tons were all short; and by careful figuring we found that, allowing the same shortage to former bills, not a cent was due Spud Samson. I whispered this device among others, of Spud's customers, and he also, his money and credit gone, soon became a boarder at free lunches, and a pensioner of heeltaps.

Then the two brothers called me to them, and said:

"You are no longer our servant, but our son: whatever we have is yours."

I told them my case, and they bade me take what money I wished. I at once began adver-

tising for painted brass plates, and soon it seemed to me that no man or woman in town had any other business than painting plaques.

But one day my heart leaped into my mouth, for there stood Joan before me. She did not recognize me, for I had disguised myself to prove her. I bought her plaques, and as I slowly counted down the price, asked carelessly :

“Cannot a comely girl like you find some honest mechanic to support her?”

She bristled up, and said archly :

“I had a handsome tailor lad in love with me, but I could not marry him for I am a lawyer’s daughter.”

“And is not a tailor wiser than a lawyer, let alone a lawyer’s daughter?”

“What!” she exclaimed in pique, “If I told you my experience you would see that few men can outwit a lawyer’s daughter.”

“I see a story in your face,” I said, “and I will order as many more plaques if you will tell it to me.”

“It is not that,” she replied gently, “but I hear that you are the friend of the friendless, and perhaps you may help me find the tailor lad, who loved me, and who, I fear, is in trouble.”

She then narrated what had befallen us, omitting only my disgrace, and added :

“The day after Herbert Alden went away, some one slandered me to my employer, and he at once cut down my pay one half, so that I could hardly buy paint, not to speak of bread. I hunted everywhere for work without success ; but one day a Mr. Samson called on me, and told me that a rich aunt of his wanted a companion ; that he had recommended me, and that he would at once drive me to her house. I distrusted the man, though his father had been a deacon. But despair is not long critical, and, after a moment’s hesitation, I stepped into his carriage. He drove me some distance beyond Harlem river, and gradually, as I saw no signs of his aunt, the fear grew in my heart, that he had set a snare for me. I resolved to test him, and drawing a smile over my face, said :

“ ‘ My dear friend, I am so in love with you, that I would gladly find this aunt of yours an aunt of the imagination.’

“ ‘ Joan,’ he replied, ‘ had I not feared to offend your scruples I would have told you so before.’

“ ‘ Fear nothing,’ I said, and with my foot slyly pushed the whip from its socket. ‘ Look !’

I exclaimed, 'the whip has fallen out of the carriage.'

" 'I will jump down and get it.'

" 'No, no! I dare not take the reins at the top of this hill.'

"With that I sprang from the carriage, ran back, picking up the whip, and returning, exclaimed:

" 'Infamous wretch! Did you plot to starve me into dishonor?'

"As I spoke I struck the horse smartly, and we ran in opposite directions."

"Tired and hungry I hastened on with blind feet. I knocked at three or four houses, but was driven away by unknown tongues. At length I sat down in some bushes under the lee of a hillock and wept. Presently I saw lights—for it was now dark—approaching me. I watched them closely and discovered dusky figures moving aimlessly about often stooping to the ground.

" 'Am I deceived?' I thought, 'or do I smell roast meat?'

"As soon as the lights had vanished, spurred by hunger, I crept towards the fountains of the savory smells. There, what was my delight to find roast pigs, chickens, fish and other delicacies. It flashed upon me that I had strayed

into the Chinese graveyard, which I had read lies near the cemetery of the Sacred Heart. This food must be the offerings to the dead.

"I was falling upon the viands with no ghostly appetite, when I felt myself seized by two velvet-shod men, who carried me to a house near by. Here we were greeted by an old virago, who seemed to be their servant, and who at once took me in charge.

"My captors, I soon learned, were curators of the Celestials' burial place, and receivers of stolen goods. All seemed to divine by a subtle instinct that I was friendless, and that no one would search for me. The virago made me work day and night, while she took her ease, and at first I was in hourly fear of a worse fate. But fence, tyrant, and fury as she was, she had the virtue of her sex, and would have defended me to the death against any gross indignity.

"My lease of life, however, I soon saw was short unless I could escape from my slavery. But my captors' vigilance left me no other means than words. Then I said to myself, 'Words are the food of the simple, but the dishes of the wise, and I will serve up in mine, a portion that shall satisfy the strongest appetite.'

"With that I secretly exerted myself, not without success, to please both the Chinamen. One day I said to Wing :

"Wing, I love you, and warn you that this very evening your partner intends to kill you, that he may marry me ; I will touch your foot at dinner the moment he is about to strike."

"I said the same thing to Sing Wo, and at dinner touched the foot of each at the same moment. Out flew their two long knives, and both Chinamen fell dead as by the same stroke. So keen were the blows that their pig-tails were cut off at the level of their necks. Thus with the same medicine both the almond-eyed were cured of the disease of life, and became candidates for the offerings they had so often prepared for others."

"What !" I cried, "are you the Joan Starrow with whose daring the press is still ringing?"

Then I bowed my head and thought : "How shall I tame the pride of this falcon?"

I questioned Joan, and she replied that young Vanderpoel owned the house, that all the Chinamen had tried to hire it, but that he would have none of them, and that no one else would hire it red. I bade her to wait a few minutes, and running to Vanderpoel's office, got the house

for a song. On my return I called a trusted servant and persuaded Joan to drive there with us. Entering I took a spade, and began digging in the cellar, where I soon struck a small mass of metal. This and others I had carried to the carriage till it was full, and the carriage was then driven to my office, unloaded, and driven back. After a week I returned to my office and found it piled to the ceiling with the mysterious freight.

I then said to Joan :

"My father often told me, that it is the custom of Chinamen to melt down their surplus money into buttons, which they call "Sycee," and bury it in the ground. These wretches, as I rightly guessed, followed the custom. What you see before you is pure silver. This money shall be a treasury for all unfortunates. Which of us has shown more wit?"

"I indeed killed them, but you have eaten them," she said, with a sigh.

"Why do you sigh?"

"I was wishing that the tailorlad, who loved me, had been as wise as you."

Then I said to her: "I belong to the mother-craft, the boss-craft, of the world, and owe to it what little wit I possess."

"What is that craft?" she asked humbly.

"The tailor trade," I replied, taking off my disguise.

"Herbert!"

"Joan!"

The next moment she was folded in my embrace.

"What the camel is to the Arab, the reindeer to the Laplander, the buffalo to the Indian, the kaiak to the Eskimo, the cabbage to the German, and the bamboo to the Chinaman, the free lunch is to the scholar."

When the Rustler had finished this tremendous sentence his lower jaw naturally fell, and his mouth gaped wide for a second or two. Then taking a handkerchief from his pocket he pressed his jaw in place, and hastily left the table.

This movement, which made my friends smile furtively, gave my own heart a shock, the effect of which must have been seen in my face.

Wood, Aleck, George and Walter laughed again to see me so serious, and Wood asked me why my mood had so suddenly changed?

"Boys," I said, "I will tell you a story."

At this the faces of my friends became far more gloomy than my own ; for a dead-beat is not more hateful in the sight of a boarding-house keeper than a sober story in the ear of a Bohemian.

No one, however, dared say a word, for I was the Treasurer of the Club, but all, including the Rustler, who had now returned, sat watching my purse as closely as a broken gamester the pile of a lucky player, from whom he expects to charm a stake.

MORE TRUTH THAN TALE.

"As you know," I said, "I have been in the country this last month."

They nodded sullenly.

"Well, I will tell you a pastoral tale, an idyl."

"An idyl!" they echoed funereally.

"An idyl, but first suppose we have a taste of soup, for I feel as hollow about the ribs as though a dozen Eves had been stolen from me."

"That's a good story; I like the ending hugely," said the Rustler. As he spoke, his lower jaw again fell; again he pressed it in its place, rose and left the table.

"You would not believe," I said, "how much pain that sight gives me. But to my story, which has far more of truth than tale about it."

Three months ago I had a severe attack of dyspepsia. My doctor advised me to take a tonic, which, as I had paid him his fee, I felt bound in honor to do. So I bought a bottle

of Baystate Bitters, and found it so good that I soon added a second and a third. As I am an honest disciple of total abstinence, I was more surprised than pleased two months later to find myself chained down in a room in Bellevue Hospital in a state of delirium. Not to speak of snakes, black cats, Saurian monsters, and other familiar offspring of the horrors, my optic nerve favored me with two pictures, that may boast a touch of originality.

A throng of dwarfs so small that a crane could have gobbled them all up, flitted about my bed. Presently they added cubit after cubit to their stature, till they supported the roof upon their shoulders. The giants, with frightful grimaces, reached out their claws to rend me, then suddenly vanished.

Soon after I heard a man in a boat on the East River, whispering to his emissaries how to find me and kill me. He bade them light upon me as the dew falleth, and after binding me with extra chains slice me and mince me, and added directions ad nauseam about the disposal of my remains. I could hear the villains calling back to their chief for further instructions, and sharpening their knives on curb-stone and doorstep: I heard their bloodthirsty footsteps; I felt the breath of their knives, but I could see

nothing. The mystery, the suspense was horrible.

My life had been spent in searching for new sensations, but the thought flashed through my mind that I was doing too large a business for my capital. "You can but kill me," I shrieked at length, and seemed to fall asleep.

I have a vague remembrance of having been taken to the Pavilion, the insane ward of Bellevue, the next morning, and then my mind became a blank.

When I next awake to consciousness, where am I? How long have I been here, a year, a day, an eternity? Who are these creatures about me? Am I mad? Why don't you answer me?

I assure you that no Athenian nor Yankee, the two characters who are always searching for some new thing, but would begin to doubt his method, if he woke up in a cell of a lunatic asylum. The horror of that waking! Surrounded by half a dozen gibbering idiots I wonder that I did not indeed go mad.

I soon found out that I was in the hospital on Wards Island, one of sixteen hundred lunatics. At first in my despair my will seemed palsied. The air burdened with the melancholy voices of unreason stifled me.

But soon through the chinks of my soul's dark cottage, rays of light forced their way. Slowly my reason reasserted itself. I began to talk with the "ticks" as they style themselves. But I found that that weakened my will. Then I became as silent as a dead town crier. I borrowed papers and books from the keepers, and sitting in a corner learned them by heart. I next took to writing on the parchment of my brain. Soon I could think as well when surrounding by chattering "ticks" as alone in a library.

As I grew stronger a sense of injustice, and a feeling of rage nearly shook my reason from its seat. One day the keeper took me to my bath. I looked at the tub. "I don't want to bathe in such water," I said. It had been used by a dozen men before me, and the surface was slimy.

"Oh! in with you," said the keeper, too lazy to pull out the stopper and turn on the faucet.

It seems like a trifle but I never before found it so hard to keep my temper. I grew as hot as Nebuchadnezzar's furnace. But like a spark within a flame this thought, "Your getting free depends on your controlling yourself," was always before me. My eyes must have had

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the fighting glare in them, for the keeper drew back from me a moment ; and his manner grew more respectful, as without another word I stepped daintily into the sewer.

The Bellevue Lunatic Asylum, I soon learned, is a sort of college. There is a preparatory school, where doctors watch for developments in the candidates, and decide for what special course each is fitted. Last comes the ward of convalescents ; the small graduating class, who have passed the difficult examinations needed to gain your diploma.

It must be a pleasant thought for a man with poor relations on his hands to fall back on, that he can at any time for ten dollars buy two doctors' certificates that one of his relatives is insane, and have him boarded by the State. Once in the asylum, a prisoner is as wholly cut off from the world as though in Siberia. Except the convalescents, none of the patients are ever visited by commissioners or any one else, and no letters are sent unread.

For myself I had plenty of friends in town, who, if they knew where I was, would come and see me, and if necessary bring the matter before the courts to get me out. But the publicity and the taint on my name I dreaded almost as much as remaining in the asylum.

To confuse the matter more, I had written a good deal of poetry, and the American public would, I well knew, consider that conclusive proof that my mind was unsound. However, I felt that I must open some connection with the outer world of idiots, and began cudgeling my brains how to effect it. The less education the more wit, is a rule that generally holds good, and passing by the doctor of my ward, who was a monomaniac, I devoted myself to the poorest paid keeper. I soon persuaded him that I was as sane as Socrates. How? By asking him to drop a letter into the New York Post Office, and bring back to me a gilt chain to exchange for my gold one. The chain was so like my own that we exchanged them without any suspicion lighting upon him ; and in a few hours I had proof that my friend, a discreet lawyer, had received my letter.

As I now felt hopeful, I began to go more into society. At night, indeed, I was locked up with half a dozen poor creatures, but in the daytime I had a good deal of liberty, and mingled with my fellows. I soon learned that many of them were interesting characters, and not a few were sane.

Of these the best friend I made was a Swede named Nelson, a man of homely appearance,

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but of fine education. Indeed, he had Mimer's head on him, and but for a violent temper you would have deemed him sprung from the asas or wiser vanas. He had a beautiful wife, whose portrait he carried in his breast, and whom I suspected was the cause of his undoing, though I never hinted at it.

When I first saw him he was in a terrible passion. He was a fresco painter, and he had been promised his immediate freedom if he would fresco a large hall. This he had done with great beauty, and he was furious when he found that he had been tricked.

The day after he became acquainted with me, he said to me: "You will get out," "You too," I answered cheerfully and at once began to coach him. I told him that his one aim should be to control his will, and endure in silence. In a few days he began to comfort his heart with a morsel of hope, the first happy feeling which he had had for months. But one day he ran up to me with his lips purple with rage. Before I could inquire what was the matter, he began to swear by all the Gods from the elder Edda down to the present day.

"What do you think?" he cried, "they are going to change my ward. They are going to make me sleep in the bed of that negro, who

has been sick for a week without changing the sheets."

I confess that for a moment I was cut off from my base, and my heart gave a youthful jump that not even the sight of Venus fresh from Paphian wells would have inspired it to make. I soon, however, resumed the philosopher, and reasoned with Ole Nelson about chiaroscuro, or the tender relations of white and black, with an eloquence that would have made artist or Christian melt into tears. I reminded the Swede that he was a Communist, and that this was a trial imposed on him by Lok to test his sincerity, an argument which he received with a wry face.

He promised, however, to keep cool and I left him with good hopes. But, alas, in the middle of the night I heard that there had been a terrible row in his ward, and I knew well enough what it meant. Nelson would be transferred to the violent ward, and I feared that I should never see him again.

My own college course, thanks to outside influence, was now rapid, and imagine my surprise a week later at meeting my friend, the Swede, in the ward of convalescents.

I had scarce time to speak to him when Doctor Daland the head physician, entered the room,

and came towards us. The doctor, who is a formal man, walked with his hands behind him, and as he drew near, bowed in a stately manner, and said : " Gentlemen, good-morning."

" Doctor Daland," said the Swede eagerly, " I am in a great hurry to get out of this place. I have heard something about my wife's conduct that troubles me, and I am afraid she may take my two children abroad."

" Your ward physician, have you spoken to him?"

" Yes," replied Nelson coloring. " He says that I can get out in a week, but that may be too late. Doctor, all rests with you. You know well enough that I am not insane. Sometimes when I talk about social questions and communism, I get wild about the wrongs poor people suffer. But I am perfectly sane, and you know it, Doctor. I want to get out at once."

The Swede's voice grew shrill, and it was clear to me that his high temper had not been softened by his new feeling of jealousy.

" You must see your ward physician," said the doctor. " I fear that you will not be wholly cured for some weeks."

The Swede's face grew livid : he clinched his hand : he was on the edge of a berserker rage.

"Doctor," he hissed, "permit me to say that I do not think that you are a judge of insanity."

As he was speaking his lower jaw fell, and gave his face a vacuous expression, which I shall never forget.

The doctor bowed in a stately fashion, and whispered to the messenger. A moment later a ward physician ran into the room with two keepers, my friend was removed, and Doctor Daland continued his walk.

Ten minutes later, after the doctor had time to forget this incident, I came up to him.

"Doctor," I said to him, "I had the pleasure of meeting you once at one of Mrs. Castor's receptions." The doctor looked pleased. "I suppose," I added, "that in a few weeks I may be able to leave this retreat?" The doctor looked serious. "If I do," I said, "my case will have been wonderful. When I first came here I was a howling maniac, and if I am cured I shall owe it wholly to your method. I shall always feel deeply grateful to you."

The doctor's face looked like a swarm of honeybees. Had he had a tail he would have smiled at both ends.

The next morning I was told that I was free.

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I took leave of my friends, and last of all of the Swede. Ole Nelson spoke a few words to me : then his feelings overcame him : again his lower jaw fell, and his mouth remained open. As my hand pressed the door-handle, he turned his face to the wall in silence."

A MORMON MAIDEN.

WHY not ?

You will be safe enough, as long as you do not take your wife with you—or mention your trip to her. Indeed, you will be safe enough here if you take your wife with you ; for the over-married are now the undermarried ; the Mormon Elders at present are not a few of them sojourning in “ Pen ”—what an expressive abbreviation for penitentiary ! “ He is in ‘ pen ’ ” “ ; he has just come out of ‘ pen ’ ” is a phrase you catch at every corner.

The Latter Day Saints of to-day are far more concerned in planning how to keep their own wives secure, than in trying to rob the Gentiles of their small particulars.

Why not then penetrate to the center of the Mormon social and religious life ?

What can be of more interest to every one ? To the moralist, who stands aghast at the sight of so hideous a monster as polygamy rearing its head in our blameless country : to the

purist, who wonders how he can cure the evil without inflicting cruel wrong upon the ignorant and the innocent: to the perverted mind of the poet, who sees in a theory of a number of hardworking wives a way in which he can pursue his penniless calling; to the novelist and sociologist, who behold a unique, isolated phase of man's development; and above all to one, who will last confess it, the New England historian, who can best understand the Puritan theocracy of two centuries ago by studying the Mormons under their leader Brigham Young—the same fanaticism, the same habit of referring all things to the advice of their "Elders," the same vices at least, if not the same virtues.

How shall we best catch Mormon society in dishabille? That is the question I asked myself, and taking a hint from Long Branch and Newport, soon found myself on the train from Salt Lake City to Garfield Beach. Once there, I almost forgot the object of our journey. Such a view, so full of opposite charms, filled the eye with delight! A beautiful inland sea reaching out of sight; mountains sloping quietly to the clouds or rising sheer from the dancing waves; light clouds flecking the sky or hanging like half transparent veils from the brows of the

mountain peaks over the valleys the verdure of an oasis.

But it is the opening day for the beach, and five thousand people soon recall us from the clouds. Not a few of them dressed in the semi-ball dress of the Manhattan Beach bathers dash with us into the water. In we swarm, Mormons, Gentiles—Jews and Gentiles singularly enough are here classed as one—in we dash tenderfeet and old-timers. There is a great sputtering, for if the water gets into your eyes or mouth, it makes them smart shrewdly. But alas a worst feature yet, one notices among the bathers a certain constraint. There is in Salt Lake bathing none of that fond insecurity and soft sense of danger which justifies one in pressing his offers of assistance upon the semi-sinking fair in Atlantic waters. It is impossible to sink if you try, or indeed to swim unless you lie on your back; in the ordinary serpent posture, your heels fly up in the air and you make no progress.

There is nothing like having a good start; and what better beginning could one make in the study of Mormon society than to see the Mormon youths and maidens, as far as propriety permits, in nature's dress? Plain living, little thinking and hard work have made the

boys and girls about as attractive looking and their parents a little less attractive than our people east. But the absence of men degraded by their vices—for among the Mormons one sees no drinking or smoking and indeed never hears a “cuss word,” brings up the average.

When the bathers issue from their bath houses—which by the way are far superior to any on our eastern beaches—it takes a keen eye to tell the difference between Mormons and Gentiles. Only, if a woman is loud or a man “flown with insolence and wine,” you may be sure he is not a Mormon.

It is as easy to obtain an introduction to a Mormon family as to any other, and one introduction goes a long way, as many families number half a hundred children each. The wise Gentile, as soon as he becomes acquainted with his hosts at once selects the brightest girl among them, and asks her and her father to the theater. If she happens to be the daughter of her father's first wife you ask the mother also, but nowadays in the cities no Mormon dares appear with any except his primal spouse.

Imagine me then on my way to the theater with the youngest daughter of Apostle Froast, her quasi-stepmother—her own mother has with a generous caution given her ticket to her

partner, and her father is in "pen," so he cannot come—in his place a worthy friend of the family, a Jack-Mormon. And who in the world is a Jack-Mormon? It is an expression borrowed from Jack-rabbit, invented by the harsher Gentiles and applied as a term of opprobrium to the Gentile who affiliates with the Mormons.

I give my arm to the older lady, who repays me with a seat beside Miss Judith at the theater.

The theater was built by Brigham Young himself, modeled on the Drury Lane Theater, and is about as large as the late Union Square Theater. Two quarter rows of seats in the dress circle were reserved for Brigham's family, and to four of these we are shown by the usher.

The theater is almost always well filled, and employs native talent as well as foreign. The Mormon company is inferior in dramatic ability to no others except the best.

It is sometime before the curtain rises, and in lieu of studying the story of "The Two Orphans" I study the face and appearance of my companion, whom death would scarcely dare attempt to make an orphan, for she could lose half a dozen parents, and still have enough and to spare.

Miss Judith's dress greatly resembles that of

a girl from Springfield or other inland New England towns ; except her hat, which is one of the latest—or for aught I know of the earliest—Parisian style, and which, overgrown with laces, feathers and ribbons, prettily overshadows her serious face.

How does she talk, and what does she talk about? Her habit of thought and speech is very much like that of a bright pious New England girl from an inland town, whose mind has been untouched by the agnosticism of Harvard College.

And what does she talk about? Most Gentiles would eagerly reply, polygamy. As unmarried men think that married men talk of nothing but marriage, so monogamists think that polygamy is the chief topic of interest to Mormons. There is some truth in this idea to-day, but I have little doubt it is exceptional and only springs from the fact that “pol” leads to “pen,” and that so many of the élite of the Saints are now suffering a matrimonial martyrdom far greater even than that to which our married men are accustomed.

A Gentile has however to be pretty well acquainted with a Mormon girl before he can expect to sound her heart very accurately on so serious a question.

Meanwhile Miss Judith is asking me a thousand questions: What do the girls in New York wear? Is it "really true" that ladies go to balls so décolletées? How can they be so wanting in womanly instincts? Do married men and women ever flirt? How revolting! Do ladies bleach their hair? Do they pinch their feet like the Chinese women we read of? Do they read mostly religious books and papers? What kind of young men do they prefer? intelligent men or dancers and singers? To which I answer with a brave essay at omniscience, and a patriotic effort to force truth to conform as much as possible with the facts.

Presently I get my innings, and force Miss Judith to point out to me the famous Apostles present: Grant with his shrewd Jewish face: Bishop Sharpe with whom the descendant of two Presidents does not disdain to while away a part of the business day. Near the former sits a bright looking lady, the daughter of the famous orator Orson Pratt. She is talking to Martyr Clawson, pale from the "pen," in whom two lucky daughters of Brigham Young claim an undivided interest. In the pit, Miss Judith wishes it was the bottomless pit, sits an apostate, a Mr. Walker, one of five brothers of highest blood, who grew rich on the bounty of the

Saints, and whose desertion at the time of the Godbe heresy almost emptied paradise. To-day their bank, hotel, opera-house and palaces are thorns in the sides of the brethren.

"What a wonderful building your Tabernacle is!"

"Have you been in it?" she asked. "I am glad you like it."

"I think the pews are a little too open, but tell me, do the Mormon girls ever flirt in church?"

"Never," she replied, warmly. "It would be very wrong and besides—" she added less hastily.

"Besides what?"

"Besides nothing. I forgot you are not a Saint," she added with a blush.

"My dear young lady," I replied, "you will make me twice a sinner, if you excite my curiosity so. Remember, it was Eve's curiosity that kept us all from being Saints."

"Well, if you insist on it, it is not only very wrong but very unsafe. One cannot press your hand without its being heard all over the Tabernacle."

"And is the theater as bad?"

"Far worse," she said, removing her hand with needless caution from mine.

She told the truth about the Tabernacle, for it is the most wonderful speaking-gallery in the world : you can hear a pin drop or a man rub his hands together two hundred and fifty feet away.

I then told her that I had studied the Temple and that its clasped hands and all-seeing eye were very suggestive.

"Do you not think it the finest building in the world?" she asked earnestly.

"With some changes in its form it might be the most beautiful building in the world."

This praise of the great temple, a homely structure enough, greatly pleased her, and after a little personal flattery, I ventured to ask her what she thought of polygamy. Like a drop of rain on a lady's new hat this question made her suddenly silent.

"I was talking yesterday," I continued, without taking any notice of her change of mood, "to one of the Elders. He told me he had been asked by a clergyman how he could defend polygamy. 'Do you expect?' the Elder had replied, 'to meet your wife in heaven?' 'Yes.' 'Well, if your first wife dies, and you marry a second, third and fourth you will meet them all in heaven?' 'Yes.' 'Well, you think it right to be in polygamy for all eternity, but wrong for this brief span of life.'"

Miss Judith could not help smiling.

"Tell me," I said, "would you not rather have a husband all your own than own an undivided or even a divided half or quarter of him?"

"But is a Gentile's husband all her own?"

"As a rule, yes."

"I have read novels," she whispered, "about Paris and New York that tell a different story."

"The question of polygamy is, to be sure," I said, "now merely speculative: with the railroads it would have been doomed even if the law——"

"The law is very cruel and unjust," she replied quickly. "They might have made a law about the future, but they had no right to make a law about the past. For forty years we lived here a foreign nation. We toiled as no other people ever toiled: over the burning lands of the desert we spread the snow from the mountain tops: we made the wilderness blossom like the rose. What right have you, after treating us as aliens for forty years, to pass a law to stigmatize our mothers? Two wrongs do not make a right. You would not do it to Turks or Indians, why to us?"

The girl was very much in earnest. I had forgotten that her mother was one of the semi-

detached. Easy as it was to disprove her, I was her guest and not wishing to wound her feelings, said nothing more.

"How is it," I asked my friend, the Jack-Mormon, on my return to my room, "that the Mormons keep the women in such subjection? Do they never revolt? It would be well worth while to learn their secret."

"I will tell you a story that will answer both questions," he replied.

"During Brother Brigham's latter reign a young Elder married a buxom girl. She was his first love, and formed to make her husband happy and faithful. But like many another wandering son of Adam he was fond of experiments, and after a fond honeymoon sealed a second—a third—and a fourth daughter of Zion. Each new wife, as it turned out, only served as a foil to heighten the charms of his first. But a result followed, hard enough to understand in physics, though not so difficult in psychology. Each new wife that served to tie the husband more closely to his first love pulled his first love farther apart from him.

"One day, when he had just tenderly announced to her the failure of his fourth experiment, she flew into a gentle rage, and told him that if it took the last dollar she had in the

world she would off to Brother Brigham and get a divorce."

"The outraged husband tried to pacify her; exhausted every term of endearment; avowed her his first, second, third, last and only love: recalled their whispering walks and cooing hours: in vain.

"At length, finding all other arguments useless. 'Cruel monster,' he exclaimed, 'if you abandon me thus without cause you shall be lifeless through eternity. I will never—I swear it on the Book of Mormon—I will never call you up.'"

"Call her up?" I asked excitedly. "What is that?"

"Unless a woman is married, and unless her husband in heaven calls her up, she molds forever in the grave."

The idea of calling up a wife, like ordering up a trump in euchre, or whatever the game is (I have no vices), seemed to me delicious.

"What a pull these Mormons have over their wives!" I thought. "We need some such obedient charm sadly. I wonder how it would work in the east? I must try it on."

"And did the woman yield?" I asked eagerly.

"No. She told her husband that she did not

care a snap of her finger whether he called her up or not ; that if he did call her up she would not come."

"I am sorry for it," I said thoughtfully,
"So good a scheme ought never to miscarry."

TOLNUK AND IMA.

A PARTY of otter hunters were slowly moving over the calm sea. Their hunting grounds were northeast of Oonalaska, a large island west of the Alaskan Peninsula. Suddenly Tolnuk, the youngest of the hunters, raised his paddle and pointed to a grinning head two hundred yards or more distant. The semicircle of bidurkas (two-hatch skin canoes) quickly closed round the otter hole—for it might well be called so, so rapid were the otter's movements. The hunters beat the water with their hands and paddles, and when the otter, ten minutes later, rose again to breathe, drew closer round their quarry. A third and fourth time the hunted animal rose to find his chances of escape lessening. His head, when it next broke the surface, was so near Tolnuk as to invite his spear. The hunter's hand was poised, and the next instant the head of the bladder-spear would have pierced the otter's brain, when a pistol shot caused Tolnuk to turn his head. The shot was followed by two others in rapid suc-

cession. Tolnuk's face clouded, and, with a hurried word to his comrade, he rapidly urged his bidurka in the direction of the shots.

Tolnuk was a quarter-breed—that is, his father and mother were half-breeds of the Eskimo village of Ikogmute, on the river Yukon. Though having a brilliant career before him at home (for his father was a tungak or sorcerer), Tolnuk, like so many young Eskimo, was no sooner able to build for himself a kaiak than he gave free rein to his roving disposition. After wandering thrice as far as Ulysses, early one summer he pitched his tent (if a skin stretched to windward on paddles, which forms an Eskimo summer residence, can be so called) near the largest village of Oonaslaska. Here he became a sea-otter hunter, a business at which he gained a thousand dollars a year.

The richest man on the island, whose name was Bornim, lived in this same village. Though he had reached the venerable age of forty-five, his violent and revengeful nature was still untamed. Strangely enough, though a half-breed, in his religion and feelings he was, in most questions, a bigoted Aleut. He had a creole wife, and his daughter Ima, whom he had kept unmarried till she was sixteen, was the most

attractive girl and the best match on the island. Tolnuk had won her good graces at festivals, when a quarrel, which Bornim in a drunken fit had forced upon him, made the old man his enemy. Besides this obstacle to his marriage, Ima's father had been poisoned against our hero by an artful shaman, or "servant of Satan," who wanted Ima for his own wife, and who foretold great dangers and evils that would befall Bornim if he consented to his daughter's marriage with the handsome young stranger.

But love smiles at shamans, and one day, when Bornim was on a distant otter-hunting excursion, the lovers were married. At first, they hid themselves from all but their friends; but, as for a whole year there was no news of Bornim or his party, it was supposed that they had been lost. Tolnuk, however, was left in painful uncertainty whether Bornim might not at any time come to life and wreak vengeance upon him. His fear was the more harassing because his love for Ima forbade him forestalling her father by killing him.

Tolnuk's free hand made him many friends, and they were all on the watch to give him warning of Bornim's return.

The news, however, which greeted him on reaching the friendly boatman, who had fired

the three pistol-shots, was worse than his fears. He was told that Bornim had returned during a heavy fog ; that he had—for he held by the old superstitions—cast his hunting clothes into the sea, and that the first notice his widow had of his resurrection was his demand for the new suit which it is the custom of a loving spouse to make for her husband when away hunting sea-otter.

Alas! This very suit was at present being worn by our hero.

“But my wife!” cried Tolnuk, seizing the phlegmatic speaker by the arm at this point of his narrative. “Tell me—is she alive? Is she safe?”

“She is alive,” said his friend, “and unhurt, but in deadly peril. Listen. Ima’s mother dared not tell her husband what had happened. She threw some skins over him, and answered question with question. He had brought back two thousand dollars’ worth of otter skins. Where was his daughter? She was on a visit. Yes, he had been well; but he must see Ima at once. The debate between Bornim and his wife was interrupted by Tolnuk’s enemy, the shaman, who, in a few words, told everything, even to Tolnuk’s having on, at that very moment, his father-in-law’s clothes.

"Up sprang Bornim, in a frenzy that scarcely needed the spur of the evil spirit which the shaman blew into his heart. His wife fell to the ground under a cruel blow from his hand. Then away he ran to find his daughter, who had heard and fled. In his rage he might have slain her; but, fortunately, during his search for her he drank so much rum—to which, of late, he had been a stranger—that, just as he was hot upon her trail, he fell down senseless."

Tolnuk listened to all this news breathless. How bitterly he cursed the greed that had kept him from carrying away his bride to his people! His hopes and fears were in high debate whether or not he should find his father-in-law recovered from his drunken fit, and his wife stolen from him. He paddled swiftly toward the shore, and, on reaching it, found himself in Ima's arms.

"Fly, fly!" she whispered to him. "Our friends have hidden me; but the moment father awakens, his death alone can save your life. He has sworn to marry your widow to the shaman."

Tolnuk embraced his wife tenderly. In a moment his resolution was taken. Storing his bidurka with dried meat, which his friends brought him, he seated his wife in one seat and

himself in another, drew the sack that rimmed the hole above his seat up under his armpits, and, bidding his friends good-by, started for the home of his boyhood, on the banks of the Yukon.

It is hard for a tame and timid people to understand the daring spirit of a sea-nomad like our young Eskimo. Hundreds of miles along a sparsely inhabited coast, in a skin canoe! Food! drink! where shall they find them? Sea-weed, shell-fish, and the fruit of spear and rifle must furnish the former, and for the latter, incredible as it may seem, salt water will suffice.

It was early in July, and they had the two Summer months before them. Had they not been haunted by the fear of pursuit, the perils of their journey would have seemed light. At times Tolnuk tried to persuade Ima that her father would forget or forgive them; but Ima, always shook her head sadly and answered: "A man is not a bear." She meant by this familiar metaphor to say that a man, far from being as gentle and forgiving as a bear, is a revengeful and bloodthirsty animal.

Day after day Tolnuk and Ima urged on their way, paddling sometimes twenty hours without sleep. On their right rose the tall volcanoes of

the Alaskan peninsula, treeless but thickly covered with bog-moss and brilliant flowers. Every few days they reached an Aleutian village, at which they were well treated.

At times, now, even Ima forgot their danger, and asked her husband many questions about their new home. Like a true woman, she was anxious to learn whether she would be mistress of her own barabara, or half-round hut, with more questions about her husband's future mode of life and her own duties than he could well answer. He told her that when he joined his people he should become a tungak, as his father was, that he should first have to wander into the mountain forest and fast for many days, till an otter appeared before him. This he must kill, cut out its tongue to dry, and keep sacred. He must then skin the otter and bury its body in the ground.

This serious talk, however, interested Ima less than Tolnuk's account of the dress of the Eskimo women.

At length, toward the end of July, the travelers had passed Kuskokvim Bay and entered the most southern mouth of the largest river of North America, the Yukon. The changing scenery before them would have seemed, to cultivated eyes, ideal pictures of sublime deso-

lation. Vast frozen moors, covered with sere grasses and bog-moss, stretched as far as the eye could reach, unbroken by tree or hill. The river itself, however, was full of life and thick with salmon and fish of every kind, and with less expert fishers than Tolnuk Ima would not have suffered for want of food. After paddling fifty miles they reached the river proper, and Tolnuk began to feel that he was nearing home. But the journey now called for great precautions, for the swift current of the river ate away its banks with a silent but rapid tooth. As they passed up the stream they often heard the thud of a falling bank. Yet every spot along the river that offered any hope of security was thickly covered with the kaiaks and the Summer houses of the Eskimo. These had gathered from plain, forest and hill for hundreds of miles on either side the mighty river, to lay in their Winter supply of salmon, and from every available point their nets were pushed far out into the current.

Tolnuk, after a week on his native river, had almost forgotten the existence of his father-in-law, when what was his horror, on resting a day at a village, to learn that three Aleuts, in a bidurka, had the day before stopped at the same place.

"I knew it," said Ima, sadly. "A man is not a bear. It was easy enough to track us along the coast, and they must have passed us on the river." She spoke calmly; but she, no less than Tolnuk, knew their peril.

After this narrow escape they proceeded with the utmost caution, for which they were well repaid. One day Tolnuk, who was famous even among otter hunters for his keen sight, saw a three-paddled bidurka drawn up upon the shore of the right bank. His heart gave a jump; it was Bornim's boat, he was certain. He looked carefully; there was a hill behind the boat and smoke rising at a distance. It was clear that the crew had left their boat to hunt.

Tolnuk whispered a word to Ima; they paddled softly to the bidurka. "It is the shaman's boat," he said, looking at the bidurka with a keen and revengeful eye. "He is with your father. If we scuttle their boat and set it adrift—but your father——"

"We have spared him; perhaps he will pardon us," said Tolnuk, and paddled away.

But Ima shook her head and repeated, sadly: "Alas! a man is not a bear."

They paddled on as swiftly as they could, Tolnuk choosing the best routes half by instinct and half by memory. He resolved, at the next

village they reached, to swap their bidurka for two single-hatch kaiaks.

At the next village, however, they were surprised at the silence, and, on searching about, found that the village was a cemetery. The small-pox had destroyed half the villagers, and the living had abandoned their huts to the dead.

This sight so depressed Ima that her husband gave up his plan of having separate kaiaks, and trusted to his pursuers' ignorance to out-strip them.

But a new and terrible disappointment awaited the fugitives when they reached Ikogmute. The year before the salmon had been barred from the Yukon River by huge ice jams at its mouths. Tolnuk's clan, like many others, had left the Yukon Valley, and, their neighbors said, had settled at Agali on Kuskokvim Bay. Tolnuk beat his breast and gave way to despondency. They had passed by their destination and gone hundreds of miles out of their way. The wicked shaman must have sent an evil spirit into his heart.

But Ima cheered his spirits. She gave an Eskimo a carved shark's tooth, an amulet of value, to help carry their bidurka across the divide to the Kuskokvim River, and the middle

of August beheld them launched upon the current of that rival stream. Their course had for some days lain, and still lay, through a broad interval, invaded by steep mountain spurs that pricked their way far into the grassy plain or level forest. As they descended the stream they began to feel more and more the effects of the tremendous tides that have made Kuskokvim Bay famous. At ebb tide they found themselves between high walls of mud; at flood tide the mud banks, and broad tracts of clay, gravel and bog-moss disappeared as if by magic.

By this time Tolnuk had again persuaded himself that he had thrown their pursuers off the track. Again he was doomed to be rudely undeceived. One morning they saw in the sky a gigantic inverted forest down the river. As they looked at it, the forests seemed gradually swallowed up, roots first, by the sky. What did it mean? Twelve hours later they had reached the subject of the mirage, a willow thicket, and Ima's surprise was doubled. It was clear that the entire grove was covered at high tide. There was indeed nothing strange to Tolnuk in this fact.

"But look!" he cried to Ima, and pointed toward a tall willow-tree. "What is that?"

Ima's eyes almost jumped from their sockets. Perched upon the top of the tree was neither wood-duck nor pigeon, but a three-paddle bidurka, with two men standing on the branches beside it.

"My father!" cried Ima.

"The shaman!" cried Tolnuk.

It was clear to Tolnuk that the ignorant boatmen had been caught in a falling tide by a willow tree, with no time to escape. One of them must have been swept away by the ebbing tide.

Tolnuk, as they paddled by, had now little fear of being overtaken, as his pursuers had been reduced to two. He was approaching Kuskokvim Bay, and as the villages grew thicker he was overjoyed to hear news of his people.

Hurrah! at last Tolnuk sees familiar figures. With a shout he drives his bidurka ashore at the village of Agali. He jumps out, followed by Ima, calls the oomailik or public host by name; his father, mother and kin gather round him and devour Ima and him with their eyes. Surrounded by an admiring crowd, they are led to the Kashga, the Common Council room, workshop, theater, bath and guest chamber.

A sumptuous dinner was served them—

moose meat, salmon, and dried berries, with the choicest whale and seal oil, with a dessert of rotten fish, spawn and buried salmon-heads.

The dinner over, they were going to their parents' house, when a boy whom Tolnuk had bade watch by the river side ran up with the news, "A bidurka was in sight."

Ima, who knew well her father's desperate character and the shaman's villainy, gave herself up for lost; but Tolnuk in a few words told their peril to his father, one of the most astute tungaks, or sorcerers, in Alaska; and the latter quickly proposed a scheme by which bloodshed might be prevented.

When Bornim and the hated shaman—for it was indeed they—arrived at the village, they were met by the public host and led into the Kashga, in which the tungak, with most of the men and women of the family, were seated. The tungak was masked.

Bornim at once demanded his daughter, who, he said, had been stolen from him; the tungak replied that Tolnuk and Ima had indeed come to their village.

"Where are they?" cried Bornim.

"They are dead," said the tungak, sadly. "Hark!" he added, as an old woman's voice

was heard imitating the sound of a raven. "It is Tolnuk's mother; but in vain! They are both dead."

"What killed them?" asked Bornim, awed by their sudden fate.

"A shaman had blown evil spirits into their hearts. You shall yourself hear Tolnuk. I will summon his spirit."

Going from the room, the tungak returned with a new mask, and, after terrible contortions and groans, began a narrative of Tolnuk's flight. When he spoke of Tolnuk's twice sparing the lives of his pursuers, and their keeping on his track, his hearers all cried out, "The shaman! The shaman's evil spirit!"

When the tungak spoke of Tolnuk and Ima's death, his hearers looked as though they could hardly be kept from tearing the shaman, though their guest, limb from limb.

Ima's bold but superstitious father was awed by the potent magic of the tungak. Suddenly the latter, fixing his eyes upon Bornim's trembling face, said to him: "Your death will follow hard upon the death of your daughter and her husband." These words, uttered with calm confidence, added to Bornim's guilty fears.

He pointed to his bidurka, and with faltering voice offered the tungak ten sea-otter skins

and a hundred rubles to save his life. The tungak shook his head, and then led Bornim and the shaman to two graves, on one of which were placed a wolf's skull and a pole, surmounted by the image of a fish.

The Eskimo turned to the Aleut sorcerer, and after many contortions: "Shaman!" he cried, "you sent an evil spirit into Tolnuk and Ima; they are dead. You have sent another evil spirit into the heart of Ima's father; he will soon die, yet his life can be saved, if——"

"If what?" cried Bornim, eager himself to take part in the debate.

"Shaman!" continued the tungak, paying no heed to the impertinent, not to say profane interruption—"shaman! you have done to death Tolnuk and Ima. Restore them to life, and save the life of Ima's father."

Bornim and the shaman both trembled with fear at the bold conjurer who was proposing so wonderful miracles.

The tungak's eyes burned through their mask into the brain of the shaman. "False prophet!" then cried the tungak. "Wretch! you killed your saviors. Get you hence! you pollute the ground."

The shaman, though awed, was an Aleut, and stood firm. The tungak motioned to the

young men to cast him forth, but their fear of the shaman's power kept them from stirring a finger. The shaman at this began to regain confidence; but his triumph lasted but a moment. The next, the tungak sprang upon him, bore him to the river brink, thrust him into a kaiak, and with his foot drove the light craft far into the stream.

He turned to Ima's father, who had been struck dumb by such an assault on the sacred shaman.

"Friend," said the tungak, gently, "I am the king of sorcerers. The shaman sent an evil spirit into your heart; I will drive it out."

Bornim muttered his thanks; then, at a word from the tungak, the young men took Bornim into a house shaped like half a hollow sphere, with a hole in the chimney. They then beat him on every side with all their strength; while three old women repeated over him the cries of wolves, bears and ravens, and the sorcerer, by contortions and pistol shots, aided the general effort to expel the evil spirit. At length, as Ima's father sank to the ground like a pillar of melted jelly, the tungak gave a yell of joy, and, pointing to the chimney hole, cried out: "The evil spirit has fled! the evil spirit has fled!"

Bornim, with what seemed to be his last breath, murmured his thanks.

"Reserve your gratitude," said the tungak. "The evil spirit has fled, but your hope of escape from death rests on my power to restore Tolnuk and Ima to life. Before I attempt it, swear ~~that~~ if ~~they~~ are so restored you will love them both like your own heart. Swear by the spirit of the king of the sea-otters!"

Ima's father gladly took the inviolate oath, and the tungak,—but we can only hint at the long ceremony, the darkened room, the masks, the groans of the old women, the doubt, the joy, the festival—all the pomp and circumstance that attended Tolnuk and Ima's return to life. Ima, indeed, declared that she had been as good as dead and buried, but the tungak could have had little difficulty with Tolnuk, for the sorcerer himself was no other than our hero.

Bornim, strangely enough, in a few days grew as fond of Tolnuk as of his daughter, who had been his idol; and nothing would satisfy the old man on his departure but their solemn promise to visit him at Oonalaska the next summer.

Nothing was ever heard of the shaman except vague rumors; and Tolnuk and Ima are growing into a proverb among the Eskimo of Alaska for constancy and happy love.

SLEUTH.

CHAPTER I.

LOAKAI, the capital of the Black Flags, lies at the head of the rapids of the Red River, three hundred miles from its mouth. The village of Mong is but a few miles off.

In a bamboo hut in this village, a few weeks after the beginning of this year's monsoons, sat a young man whose face belied his Chinese dress.

Lawrence Stone, or Sleuth Stone, as he was nicknamed by his companions, sprang, in fact, from an American family long resident in New York city. His father had died when Sleuth was a lad, leaving a widow, two boys and a girl.

The family had left their native land, crossed the ocean, and taken up their quarters in Rome. There, after their fortune was nearly spent, the elder brother became a painter, Sleuth a sculptor, and Bella, a girl of great beauty, studied vocal music.

A year later Bella, on whose voice the remnant of the family fortune had been spent, tried to get a position on the operatic stage, and failed. In her despair, after many attempts and trials, the weak girl fell a victim to one of those plots, so common abroad, of which the bait was advancement in her career. The infamous broker was a woman, and the girl's protector, a young Frenchman of a rich family, M. François La Motte.

Bella's mother, on discovering what the Frenchman's vanity did not care to conceal, died broken-hearted; Sleuth's brother was killed a week later in a duel with his sister's betrayer; and the wretched girl the same day fired a bullet through her heart.

Sleuth, who was in Paris, reached Rome an hour after this last tragedy. The weapon, a two-barreled pistol, by which the poor girl had tried to atone for her fault, lay on the floor beside her.

Before his sister was buried, Sleuth sought La Motte; but he had disappeared, no one knew whither, taking with him the young wife of an old comrade.

At Bella's funeral Sleuth's few friends were surprised at his manner, which, always silent and reserved, was now more quiet than ever.

Proud and honest, of a type rarely found among his class, Sleuth had a large circle of enemies. But their growing contempt now seemed to trouble him less than before.

From this time, it was noticed that he never looked at a work of art; and one of his few friends said that he carried his sister's pistol hidden in his breast, and never lay down to sleep without praying to this fetish.

It was commented on with severity that he made no further inquiries after La Motte.

But in a few weeks Sleuth left Rome, and his name was soon shaded by a titled scandal.

What became of the young man whose life had become so suddenly blighted? Seemingly without aim he wandered to and fro about the world, to Paris, to London, to Berlin, to St. Petersburg, to Constantinople, to Calcutta. Strong, supple and keen, when his money was spent, he found it easy to procure more with head or hands.

On the canaler, during his voyage to Calcutta, he fell in with an American merchant, who asked him to go with him to Peking. Americans are popular with the Celestial Government, and, after a time, Sleuth, through his friend's influence, received a strange offer from the Chinese war office. This offer, which Sleuth accepted,

placed him at the head of the "Invisibles," or secret troops, which Peking sent to aid the Black Flags against the French.

The Black Flags, with the faction, the Yellow Flags, are the offspring of the great Taiping rebellion of a few years ago, which swept China from its borders to the walls of Peking, and gave over twenty millions of people to fire and sword. The versatile Peking Government, in its policy of exclusion, had suffered the Black Flags to remain just outside their border, as a living Chinese wall to keep off the foreign devils. It now found a new use for them. Like Bulgaria, or Texas, in other countries, the Black Flags served as a veil, behind which China could be at war and peace with France at the same time.

Sleuth traveled fast to take command of his motley troops, and it was but a few weeks when his skill and bravery made themselves felt by the French invaders. Not only among his own soldiers, but among the Black and Yellow Flags, Sleuth soon gained wonderful influence. His face, without smile or frown, his free hand, his silence, his cold eyes, his contemptuous bravery, and, above all, his charmed life, made the Asiatics regard him as God or devil, as their faith favored one or the other of these deities.

Active hostilities had been suspended for a

few weeks, and Sleuth had come back from the scene of operations to recruit his force among the savage tribes of Laos and the Chinese province of Yunnan.

The rays of the rising sun were shining through a fan palm that spread before the door of the hut.

"'Tis time we were astir," said Sleuth, striking a table with his hand. "The Burmese is all ready on his way."

At the signal a crop-haired Siamese, with a cheroot stuck through a large hole in one ear, a bouquet through the other, and a tiger's tooth amulet on his neck, entered the room and made a low salaam.

"General, the boat is ready."

Sleuth walked to the door of the hut, where he stood a moment, looking about him.

The hills reach to the colored waters of the Red River, which is here something over a hundred yards in width. A few sails dotted the stream, and toward the southeast three or four villages were visible. But, these excepted, behind and around him stretched, like a waveless sea, a huge, unbroken forest of bamboo, teak and palm trees.

Stepping, south through the town, Sleuth passed a number of bamboo huts, surrounded

with cocoa, coffee, cinnamon and indigo trees. Buffaloes were at work in the fields, and elephants were piling lumber in a few lumber yards. Here and there you met a stunted horse, or a surly dog that growled at master and stranger.

The men were, for the most part, busily engaged swinging in hammocks, smoking cheroots, drinking arrack, or chewing the betelnut. The women were cooking, working about the gardens or running after their children. A strange sight to a foreigner were the babes, who nursed and smoked by turns.

On the doors of the huts were hung colored papers, on which were written prayers and praises addressed to "My Lord Tiger," extolling his prowess and clemency, but begging him of his courtesy not to honor their too humble roofs by a royal visit.

The boat in which Sleuth was to ascend the river was carrying salt, raw cotton and tobacco to exchange for the tin, opium and tea bricks of Yunnan. When Sleuth reached the slip where it lay he found that there was some delay about the cargo.

"Sail as we are," he said shortly to the captain, and was about to step aboard, when the Siamese stood before him, and, bowing,

said he feared, from the gathering clouds, that a violent storm was brewing.

"We shall sail the faster," said Sleuth, motioning him aside. "Ha!" he said; "who is this?"

A man whose blue tattooed limbs, with crimson figures of tigers and lions on his naked breast, argued him a Burmese, ran up to Sleuth.

"General," he said, making a salaam, "they are killing a man off that way."

"If they were killing a thousand," cried Sleuth, "would that excuse your not obeying my order?"

"No, General; but it is a white man."

"What!" cried Sleuth stamping his foot in fury. One of my soldiers! The dogs! How came he here? Hasten, follow me."

A word to the captain of the boat and Sleuth scurried along the road which leads to the village of a well known tribe of Laos the Cats.

A few hundred feet carried him into the jaws of that hungry monster that, fed by fierce heat and vital rage, devours all tropical works—the jungle. Two hundred yards further brought him to the top of a hillock covered with the ruins of an ancient pagoda.

Here a motley crowd of ruffians, among them

a score of Black Flags, were pressing around a flat stone that lay in front of the deserted hut of a Buddhist hermit.

On the stone was stretched a European, and near by a soldier held a white girl, who could not be more than three years of age. As Sleuth drew near, the soldier lifted up the girl and made a motion as though about to dash out her brains on the stone. The expression of agony on the face of the prisoner, and the screams of the child, made the spectators chatter with savage delight.

Sleuth touched the soldier's arm, snatched the child from him, gave it to the Siamese, and for a moment looked in silence and surprise on the scene. He could make nothing of it except that the actors were drunk with arrack.

"Is it," he thought, a bitter smile passing over his face, "merely one of those pleasantries practised on the weak and defenseless?"

Two scowling wretches now approached the prisoner and were in act to perform that operation known—in speaking of animals—as dressing. But before this rapid torture—a survival of cannibalism—two other soldiers were first to perform the grotesque horror of "slicing" the prisoner.

Sleuth's silence had been interpreted as a sanction of the torture.

The slicers had raised their razor-edged knives.

CHAPTER II.

THE next moment Sleuth walked before them and lifted his hand. Alone and unarmed he confronted the murderous eyes that glared around him. Whispers ran around the crowd. Who is he? The Silent Man? The Invulnerable? Kill him. Take care. He is the evil one.

"Take the knife," said Sleuth to the Siamese, pointing to the larger of the soldiers, who yielded without a word.

Sleuth then pointed to the prisoner. "He belongs to the Emperor; if he has done wrong the Emperor will punish him."

Sleuth bade the Siamese cut the prisoner's cords; it was well for him that his bravery and connection with evil spirits were known.

The prisoner freed, Sleuth stood with folded arms waiting for the crowd to disperse. This they did with a rapidity of which he soon learned the cause. The signs of the tornado had not been deceptive. Nothing but the wish to behold the torture of a fellow-creature had

kept the crowd from previously running back to their village to prop up their houses, and prepare to fight the aerial tiger of the tropics.

Black clouds now raced across the sky. There was a vivid flash of lightning, followed by the cry, "The tornado!"

The next minute all the savages had taken refuge in the jungle; Sleuth, the prisoner, and the little girl alone remained on the hill.

Sleuth cast his eyes about for a place of safety; and taking the child by the hand ran to the lee of a large rock, that had served as the corner-stone of the temple, and near which stood the hut of the Buddhist priest.

Scarcely had the three crouched behind the rock when a living darkness, that resembled night as a conflagration resembles sunshine, leaped from the massive cave of the clouds and flooded the earth. Down fell the rain in torrents. A minute later the tornado was upon them. Huge forest trees swayed, groaned and snapped with a noise that drowned the thunder. A thousand demons rode on the wings of the wind, hurling the stones of the ruined pagoda over the hill like huge cannon-balls.

During the storm the girl, strangely enough for she seemed little frightened, nestled in

Sleuth's arms. Her touch awoke in his heart the long-forgotten feelings of his childhood. He pressed the little stranger to his heart, and for a moment was a boy again, notwithstanding his seared soul and the long, loveless years of wild adventure.

The storm ended as quickly as it began ; the wind was laid ; the sun sprang forth from the night of clouds and dried up the deluge.

The roof of the Buddhist's hut had been blown away, and in it Sleuth found a small store-room, containing dried fish, a bundle of colored tapers, a knife, a bag of rice, a bag of sago, some betelnuts, and several boxes of cheroots.

"I can never thank you or repay you," said the stranger, finding time at length to speak to Sleuth. "You have saved my life—that is of little value—you have saved the one thing I love on earth from death or worse."

"How came this trouble?" asked Sleuth. "But it is strange I do not remember your face, though you must be one of my men."

"My friend, I will not deceive you. Though I speak your language, I am French."

"Ha!" cried Sleuth, looking at him more narrowly.

"I am an officer ; this is my only child. My

wife died a year ago, of the marsh fever, at Saigon. We had been there three years. Fool that I was! I knew the third year was the fatal year, but I put off going away. I waited to make a fortune, was ruined, and then joined the army. When we were ordered to the Red River, what could I do with my child? I could not resign in time of war. I could not leave her at Saigon, and so brought her with me, and she was the idol of the regiment. During a truce I took the child a few steps from the garrison, when I was attacked and carried off by a pack of cut-throats. They brought us in a junk to Laokai. You know the rest. And but for your aid, my child—ah, brave friend, promise me if I do not get back to Hanoi, that you will send her to my family in Paris. I trust you. Promise me.”

“I promise,” said Sleuth, overpowered by the man’s feeling. “But have no fear that you shall return safe.”

“My fear for my child has weakened my brains,” said the Frenchman. “Once I thought that nothing could unnerve me.”

“You are hungry,” said Sleuth.

“I know not what it is ; but remember your promise.”

The Frenchman had seated himself upon a

rock to devour a handful of the dried rice that Sleuth had found.

"Friend," he continued, "if I do not reach my regiment, send my child to my sister's house in Paris. No one in the East knows my real name, which I concealed on account of some youthful follies. It is François La Motte!"

"Stop!" thundered Sleuth, as the Frenchman was about to take a morsel of rice. "Taste it not."

The astonished hand of La Motte fell to his side.

For a few moments Sleuth fastened his wild eyes upon La Motte in silence.

"At last!" said Sleuth, in a tone as calm as it was ferocious; towering, as he spoke, above the shrinking figure of the Frenchman, like the genius of vengeance, pitiless, inexorable.

"At last," he repeated.

And what a strange, terrible accent of relief there was in the words! The long, long torture; the hope deferred, the bootless prayers—they were all over.

"At last," he again echoed, and, with a measured motion, drew from his breast his sister's pistol, laid it upon the rock and knelt down. Strange madness! Was he praying to the pistol?

"Wretch!" he exclaimed, rising; and at the thought of his mother, his sister and his brother his voice grew horrible. "Wretch! you had better have trusted your life to the hungriest tiger that roams the jungles; better to the worst of these cut-throats around us than to me."

"Save my child; keep your promise," cried La Motte, fitfully.

His words jarred on Sleuth's passion.

"Child!" he cried. "Do you speak of child or parent to me? You say your life has known some youthful follies; and was it a youthful folly to murder my mother, my brother and my sister?"

"He is mad," muttered La Motte, with an agonized glance toward his child. "Who are you? There is some mistake. You are not her husband."

"You have forgotten," hissed Sleuth, "but heaven does not forget. Villain, I have tracked you over the earth. Disease and death, hunger and cold, bullet and bayonet have passed by me, for they knew that I was the agent of heaven. I knew it, I knew it," he repeated fiercely. "Wherever a chance word or rumor led me I went, for I knew that behind uncertain chance lies the divine hand."

"But who are you?" again faltered La Motte.

"The brother of Bella Stone!" he exclaimed, with flaming eyes.

At these words La Motte shrank back.

"Kill me, but save my child!" he cried, pleadingly, glancing toward the little girl, who had wandered off a few yards.

The words again jarred upon Sleuth's feelings. He felt, he knew not how, that vengeance was slipping from his hand and heart.

"Monsieur," he said, "we will delay no longer; we will fight to the death."

"I cannot fight with you," answered La Motte, "who have saved my child."

"You cannot refuse," Sleuth fiercely retorted. "Our weapons? This pistol, all we have, is enough. It has one charge left. The mate of this bullet opened the gate for my sister's soul to heaven; this will speed yours the other way."

"My child!" stammered La Motte, looking again toward her.

"If you fall," said Sleuth, "I will carry her to your people. If I fall," he added, "for the impossible sometimes happens, put on my tunic, take this passport—the Emperor's own

hand—hasten to Laokai, hire a boat, and in a few days you will be safe at Havre."

La Motte's eyes filled with tears. "My friend!" he exclaimed.

"No more," cried Sleuth fiercely, growing more furious at finding any such trait in the man whom for years he had held before his eyes as the blackest of wretches. "To business. There is one shot between us. Stay! I have it."

Sleuth's eye had caught sight of the bundle of Chinese tapers that lay on the ground. He picked up two of them—one red, one white. "Choose, Monsieur," he said, offering them to La Motte.

With a mechanical hand, the Frenchman took the red one.

"Monsieur," said Sleuth, "I will light these tapers. The man whose taper goes out first loses; the man whose taper holds on longest wins, and fires across this table. Is it agreed?"

La Motte bowed his head.

Sleuth placed the pistol on the middle of the stone, set the red taper before La Motte, the white before himself. He lit first his own, then that of La Motte. The duellists were silent.

What was passing in Sleuth's mind, once so

kindly and simple? What memories, what prayers at odds with heaven, what mad fantasies? His face betrayed nothing.

But in the countenance of La Motte one might have seen at first witnesses of dark struggles—remorse, love of life and child, mixed with strange awe at the revenge that had followed him across continents and ocean, and here, amid the ruins of a past civilization, brought the reckless child of the world's gay capital to its bar.

Then he resolutely turned his eyes from the spectral lights, and fastened them upon the image of joy among the rocks.

The moments freighted with life and death crept on, till a stifled exclamation from Sleuth made La Motte turn his head, just as his own taper flickered and died.

"Monsieur," said Sleuth, "you have but a few moments to live. Do you wish to speak to your child?"

"I dare not. 'Twould unman me. You will keep your promise. Stay—give my sister this ring. Adieu!"

He turned his eyes from Sleuth to the little girl.

Raising his pistol, Sleuth pointed it with a steady hand at La Motte's heart. Not a mus-

cle of the avenging face relaxed, not a ray of pity softened his fierce glance. As his finger rested on the trigger, a scream from the child made him turn his eye, which immediately caught the glare of a tiger in the jungle, about to spring upon her. Quick as a flash, Sleuth's ball went crashing through the tiger's brain. The two men sprang toward the terrified child. La Motte kissed her as he placed her in Sleuth's arms.

"Monsieur," said La Motte, with a look of unutterable despair, "take my last thanks. My life was evil, but your vengeance is justified, and my crime has followed me to the ends of the world. I killed your mother, your brother, your sister; you saved me and my child. At a word you would spare my life, but the ghosts of your family would reproach you."

Sleuth started.

La Motte had snatched up the hermit's knife, turned, stabbed himself and fallen on his face.

The impossible happened. Sleuth was seized with remorse at the death of the enemy to whose destruction he had devoted his life.

HERO OR FOOL?

"HE was a hero," said Dick.

"He was a fool," said Jack.

This is the story of a man who, with his right and left hands, touched extreme points of opinion.

The man himself had just left us, bound on a perilous errand. It was the day on which the great mine, that was to divide the Confederate lines before Petersburg, was to be fired. Or, rather, the fusee had already been lit, but the mine was hanging fire. Captain Goodwin of our regiment, "The Gophers," had volunteered to enter the jaws of the sleeping volcano. He was never much of a favorite, for he was thought to be something of a prig. Even now he dashed the admiration his courage excited by an ill-timed allusion.

As he bade us farewell he added the mysterious words: "*Facilis descensus Averni.*" In many a frontier regiment a man's life would not be safe after such an act of presumption as to quote Latin, unless the culprit could prove that

he had been a schoolmaster; but our own regiment numbered a great many scholars.

When Goodwin had gone his old chum, Dick Reynolds, told Jack Holden and myself an incident about his past life that excited opposite opinions.

"Goodwin," said Dick, "was born in one of the retired seaports of New England. In that section of the country, and in that alone, I fear, a large percentage of young men are as innocent as girls just out of a convent. Goodwin had no vices."

Dick paused and looked sternly about him.

"As you are aware," he continued, "I have some knowledge of human nature, especially the softer half of it."

Dick, as the youngest officer in the regiment, was naturally allowed by most of us to have the most profound knowledge of woman.

Somewhat mollified, as neither of his hearers disputed his authority, Dick continued:

"I have often thought that as innocent women are more fascinated by fast men, so modest men are more often married by gay ladies. Goodwin, soon after leaving college, had fallen deeply in love with a beautiful Baltimore girl; but the affair, for some reason, I never knew what, turned out badly. He was very

much cut up, and the worst of it was, that it left him in no condition to assume the offensive. Now in love, as in war," continued Dick, more earnestly—he had let his cigar go out, as he always did when he was trying the difficult manœuvre of making two columns of thought converge in the face of the enemy. "In love as in war everything depends upon your being able to assume the offensive. If you can't, don't have anything to do with war or woman. Look at this rebellion; not to speak too modestly, the victories of our army have not been frequent or brilliant. But our general principles are right; and principles go through. We have always acted on the offensive, and we are slowly eating up the serpent of secession, beginning at the tail.

"When Goodwin was passing a winter in Chicago, he met a lady a few years older than himself, who conceived a violent passion for him. She was a fine talker, a good singer, an amateur actress and of attractive appearance. She received a great deal of admiration, and was eager to carry everything before her. In doing so she had met with repulses. She had committed the same error"—Dick lowered his voice to a whisper, for in the army no one is allowed to talk about his superior officers with

freedom—"she had committed the same error as Grant, who is forever making desperate assaults. But she was cleverer than he, for she had soon learned to manœuvre.

"Had Goodwin been acting on the offensive against the sex—had he, as every young man should, been on the warpath, armed to the teeth, in search of his ideal, he would never have been captured by Miss Warner. But he was demoralized ; and the clever actress appeared so generous, gentle, modest and desperate, that he found himself under lock and key almost before he knew that he was in danger. I have often thought," Dick spoke more slowly, "that women make a great mistake in disguising their true character from men before marriage. It does no good, and only lays up a store of misery for both. Men, when they find that they have been deceived, kick."

Dick pronounced this word with so savage a tone and look that it was hard for his hearers to believe that he was the most henpecked man in the whole army.

"Theodosia," he continued, after a pause, "for that was the name of Goodwin's wife, after her marriage soon found that to continue the character of an angel was too great a strain and drain upon her moral resources. Naturally

enough she at first swung to the opposite extreme. When she set free her long-imprisoned temper, poor Goodwin thought that a mine had been suddenly sprung under his feet. Her voice had a wide compass. Before marriage Goodwin had heard only its nightingale note, Now it roared at him like a brass band with a sore throat.

“Had Goodwin had a deeper knowledge of women”—Dick again slowed up and scratched a match with portentous solemnity—“he would have known that there were two possible methods to deal with such a woman, if he wished to live peacefully with her. One of these, the more prudent, was to allow her to swing to and fro, angel or fiend, without interruption, until of her own accord she stood still at the point of true womanhood, which lies somewhere between these extremes. The other, which I should myself have preferred, is a bolder plan: the foot of Fabius and the hand of Scipio; Argus eyes and eagle beak; silent and wary to watch her in her times of temper till her fury had exhausted itself, and then to fall upon her like a bolt from the blue and conquer her. The woman had fine capabilities, and I should myself like to have had the task of taming the shrew.”

Dick gave a fearful glance over his shoulder

as he ventured so far, for his wife had paid a flying visit to the camp only a week before.

"But Goodwin," he continued, "had no deep knowledge of woman; he was too good. Like young painters, he was all for snow and moonlight. He never understood his wife, who believed in volcanoes, Bengal lights, fire-crackers and all the pyrotechnics of passion. Goodwin's married life now went from bad to worse. What aided it on its course was the fact that his wife was a fine actress, and used to a great deal of admiration. Now, without going too deeply into the specialty of actresses, suffice to say that no one but a Briareus, or hundred-handed man, should marry an actress; for the applause of two hands is not enough to satisfy her. Presently Goodwin ceased to use even these two, and his wife again began to shine on semi-public boards. Soon afterward a strange, dark shadow passed over the young couple. Goodwin had an uncle in Maryland, a large slave-holder. This uncle dying suddenly, without a will, all his slaves became Goodwin's property. Without consulting his wife, he secretly and at no little expense set them all free. Poor Mrs. Goodwin had at once placed herself at the head of Chicago society on hearing of her husband's new fortune. She

was first informed how he had spent it by a negro clergyman who called to thank her for using her influence over her husband to so noble an end. She would have been less surprised had she heard that her husband had been translated. Hastening to him, her cheeks pale with rage:

“‘I will tell you your character,’ she exclaimed, ‘without three volumes: You are a fool!’”

“‘You and your family,’ replied Goodwin, with a touch of malice, ‘are abolitionists. I thought you loved the negro?’”

“‘Love him!’ she rejoined, furiously. ‘Is that any reason why you should not sell him?’”

“After this quarrel Mrs. Goodwin overstepped all bounds. She favored numerous admirers, among them a distant connection of hers named Sherman. Every one in society knew of her deviations except her husband. After some months she became infatuated with a ferocious German baron. This nobleman, who owned vast oyster-beds in Bohemia, never tired talking of his wealth. Goodwin was suddenly surprised by a suit brought by his wife to free her from her prison house—a habeas corpus action, I think they call it. She alleged that her

husband had been guilty of every degree of cruelty, not excepting suicide.

“As is usual in the case of domestic quarrels, Goodwin soon found himself abandoned even by his lawyers. He had little money and no friends, and his wife had retained the Judge. Suddenly the unexpected happened. Mr. Sherman, who was one of his wife’s admirers, was a rich and eccentric genius. His real love for his fellows stopped with his own sex. But he spent most of his time and money in the society of the other. When he had finished a flirtation with a married lady he used to tie up her letters, label them and place them in his safe. In case she ever persecuted her husband, Mr. Sherman sent the husband these letters as a shield. This habit gave him one of the strangest circles of friends ever known. When he learnt that Goodwin had been attacked by his wife he sent him a package of letters which Mrs. Goodwin had written him, begging her husband to return them after the trial. These letters made a perfect defense. This defense, of course, would be the death-blow to Mrs. Goodwin’s social reputation. What did Goodwin do? He read one of the letters, resealed the package, and sent them to his wife. He was a hero.”

"He was a fool!" said Jack.

"And the wife?" I asked.

"She called it a trick to impose on her magnanimity. She won her case. The war then offered a refuge from all domestic woes, and Goodwin joined the Gophers."

Jack now ran out, and, returning, said :

"I told you Goodwin was a fool. A fool always falls on his feet. Had you or I gone into the mine we should have been blown to pieces. But he relit the fusee, and has been breveted Brigadier for bravery under the field."

A LUCKY WATCH.

TIM SMALLWOOD was sitting in his parlor in the Edinborough Flats in Fifth avenue. He rose as I entered the room, and stretched out his right hand. His left held a large chronometer with a heavy gold chain attached.

I am his lawyer, and had come in answer to a telegram ; and, taking a seat beside him, I asked him to tell me his case.

Smallwood placed the watch on a Japanese tea table, that stood between the front windows, and looked at it a few moments.

"My friend," he then said, "do you know that I am growing superstitious. I will tell you all that has happened, and place myself wholly in your hands.

"This watch, my only inheritance, my father has often told me, was once of great service to him. Father was, as you know, an Englishman, but during the late war he served his country as a sutler. It happened that the Colonel of his regiment became deep in his debt, and one

day proposed to father to compromise his claim. Father assented, and soon after learned the character of the compromise; the Colonel had secured a private order to hang him as a spy. The day before that set for his execution, father sent for the Colonel, gave him a release in full of his debt, and, presenting him with this chronometer, begged him to keep it as a souvenir of their former friendship. These marks of loyalty so pleased the Colonel, that he put off the day of execution, and soon secured father's release. In the very next battle, however, the brave soldier was shot, and the watch came into father's hands again for a song sung to an enterprising ghoul.

"Though a sutler, father died poor and left me nothing but his ambition and his chronometer. I secured a place as office-boy in the Equitable Mutual Life, and gradually worked myself up. I was always very respectful to my superiors, which goes a great way in an office, where the President and his staff are as grand as stage-gods, and love to have you bowing and scraping before them from morning to night.

"Before many years I had advanced to a salary of fifteen hundred dollars, and cast about to ally myself with one of the aristocratic families of the city, a step on which I well knew

my permanent social success depended. I took rooms in the most fashionable boarding-house in Madison avenue, and with the utmost prudence began to embrace a larger number of ladies among my acquaintance.

“Not to stretch your ear too wide, I soon met with one in whom high birth and modesty were equally balanced. Her name was Estella Stuyvesant, and her family of a grandeur that almost paralyzed my hopes. But she smiled on me from the beginning, and, after a few weeks, emboldened by being allowed to lavish bouquets and other attentions upon her, I asked her to walk with me in the park. I shall never forget her answer: ‘If my father saw you walking with me, he would insult you; if he saw you take my hand, he would strike you; if he saw you kiss me, he would kill us both.’ ‘And if he saw me marry you!’ I exclaimed, urged into more haste than I had intended by one’s natural love of climax.

“Estella gave a little scream, but, presently, inquiring into my circumstances, told me that if she broke the subject to her father, doubled my salary and connected me with the Small-woods of Albany, I might speak to him with less fear of instant dissolution. I was ushered into his presence that very evening, and found

him to be all the aristocrat that I had imagined. If one spoke a hundred words to him, he answered with a nod. If one offered him a hand, he held out a little finger; and when he did open his lips, his voice made your very liver-pin shake.

“Not to dwell on details, Estella and I were engaged; six months later my salary was raised five hundred dollars, and a week afterward we were married. We took these apartments, and, as Estella had lost her mother, her father soon consented to live with us. I soon found that the society which Estella and her father introduced to our house equaled my fondest dreams. State politicians, railroad directors, bankers, and now and then a live Senator were often seated at our table. Mr. Stuyvesant was lavish enough of his money, our sideboards were always rich in bottles and boxes, and, though every one who entered our rooms was well smoked, no one ever left them dry.

“The regular bills all fell upon me, and I soon began to feel the disadvantage of being supposed to have a salary much larger than the reality. But I dared not speak of it, and resorted to many devices to make it more effective. I worked evenings in the law department of our company. I gave up the *Union* and

Century clubs, though father had been a prominent member of both. In place of my lunches at Delmonico's, I carried in my pocket a roll and a piece of cheese; and I blackened my own boots on the sly.

"Estella herself, from the day of our wedding, showed a royal contempt for mathematics. When I hinted to her that she was extravagant, she asked me pleasantly why I had married her. When I told her that we were spending twice my income, she went into hysterics. When I suggested that she would certainly ruin me, she said that her father would protect her from my cruelty. Unless I wished to lose the social position, which I had so long struggled to secure, there was nothing for me to do but to work day and night, and pray Heaven that my creditors might all die.

"In two years the money I had laid up had been eaten away. Day before yesterday my wife told me that she wanted two hundred dollars to give a Soapbubble Party in honor of Mrs. Senator Wentworth's little girl. Two years before, I should have jumped out of my skin with delight at the mere privilege of giving a party to a Senator's child. But time had brought the philosophic mind. When I expostulated mildly, Estella's face assumed the

expression of a woman, who has suffered a most deadly injury. She pointed silently to my heavy watch-chain, and then in tragic tones exclaimed: 'Dare you accuse me of extravagance?'"

"There was no help for it; my father's life-preserver, my superb chronometer, must be dropped into the maw of my '*uncle*'—my '*uncle*,' but, alas! no more like my father than grave to cradle.

"I went down town to my desk with a mind full of forebodings. I looked upon going to a pawnshop as a species of social disgrace. I did not even know where to go. But there was a versatile genius about the office named Snacks, a pigeon-toed, knock-kneed, gimlet-eyed, glib-tongued man-of-all-work, to whom the dark and devious ways of the city were familiar. To him, with a stammering tongue, I told my necessity, and hinted at a liberal commission. Snacks was fly to the sugar in an instant, and told me, that he would take me to a house that would use me in conscience. As soon as I had locked my desk, Snacks was on hand, and we walked up Nassau street together. A few minutes brought us to Chatham square, at one corner of which Snacks stopped. There was nothing very picturesque about the locality.

An old-time groggery, with its triangular porch, formed by cutting off the corner of the building; a woman, with a black shawl over her head, coming out of the shop, meeting a girl with her hair in curl-papers going in; an old gentleman with a dudeen in his mouth, one hand on the lamp post, and his head bent forward and slowly moving to and fro like the head of a huge turtle; a peddler of hose and onions; a mandarin of the red button sauntering by with bushy pantaloons tied tight round the ankles with pieces of old rope; an Italian nobleman ringing a bell to call children round his ice-cream cart; a veteran, who, with commendable modesty, stood with his back to the wall to conceal wounds not deep but eloquent. 'Come,' said Snacks, twitching at my sleeve.

"He led me into the saloon, called for two glasses of strychnine, and, with a nod and a wink, passed through the back door. Following him through half a dozen blind passages, I found myself before a number of connected and disconnected rooms, in most of which some silent business was conducting. 'There are a hundred entrances to this place,' said Snacks, 'but every one is hard to find.'

"He took me into one of the rooms: a man was seated at a table: there was nothing in

sight but a chair, table, inkstand and paper. I looked about curiously. 'How much?' asked the man at the table. 'Five dollars,' said Snacks.

"The man went into the next room, and returned with five small paper bundles. Snacks took them and paid him five dollars. 'I'll wager these packages against a three-cent piece,' Snacks said, 'that you can't tell their contents!' 'What are they?' I asked. 'In this room,' he replied, 'there is the most unique banker in the city. He deals wholly in three-cent pieces; men buy them to drop into the stages for ten cents. My chum and I ride down and up town in a stage every day; and each trip, the past year, has cost each of us but a cent and a half.'

"A shudder ran down my spinal marrow; into what company was I descending? 'In this room,' added Snacks, pointing to a more pretentious office, 'is a note broker, who does the best paying business in the city. He buys and sells worthless paper.' 'A ragman?' I asked. 'No, no; business paper. You want to make a stake by going into bankruptcy. You sell all your assets, hide away the money and buy for one per cent. one hundred thousand dollars worth of worthless promissory

notes. Then you announce that you want a little time ; six months' accommodation ; collections difficult ; plenty of collateral ; fine showing ; fortune made !'

"Snacks pointed out half a dozen other departments of this big concern ; but, at length, seeing that I was impatient to get my money, he took me into what I guessed was half pawn shop and half a blind for less reputable branches of business.

"I gave my watch to Snacks and was standing in the shadow of a corner, listening to his shrill debate with a beaked slim, when my attention was drawn to a dispute in the open. A woman was in high argument with a clerk on the difficult question, whether an article, on which she wished to borrow a dollar, was a blanket or a sieve. In the heat of the wordy duel, a side door suddenly opened, and a new character appeared on the scene, who with one word of thunder silenced the clerk and frightened the customer nearly out of her senses.

"But the effect on her was nothing to the effect on me. The world grew black before my face ; I felt myself sinking into the ground ; down, down, down. I came back to consciousness via China. The boss pawn-broker was my august father-in-law.

“As soon as I got back my senses, I asked Snacks for my watch, clapped it into my pocket, drew my hat over my face, and made for the nearest door. I promised Snacks five dollars for his disappointment, and hastened home through chaos. Had Mr. Stuyvesant learned his royal manner in the school of the pawn-brokers? And yet what better school? And I! what a triple ass, to have worshiped a skin granny? And yet there seemed to be no difference between my father-in-law and our illustrious visitors.

“I came out of this confusion with but two clear ideas. I had been a fool; I would try and be a fool no longer.

“What followed I will describe briefly. Estella asked me for the money; I told her that she could not have a cent. She retorted with hysterics. In a few minutes her father appeared, and inquired what I meant by this noise. I told him that this afternoon I had thought of pawning my watch. ‘What!’ he cried, ‘have we come to this—a pensioner of my uncle, a tramp, a rustler, a shover-up?’

“Estella said she would not see her noble father insulted. ‘Estella,’ I said, ‘come and live with me economically, and I will take care of you.’ ‘You deceived me about the amount

of your salary,' she cried fiercely, clinging to her father. 'Leave the house, you monster!' roared her father. 'It's my house!' 'I'll call the police!' 'Hold your tongue——!'

"But why describe the cruel scene? Results alone concern the wise.

"No blows were struck, as the women threw themselves between us; and in an hour every one, except myself, had left the house, breathing vengeance, lawyers, sheriffs, police, alimony and damages. My case, my dear friend, is in your hands."

"And during the quarrel did you never allude to your father-in-law's profession?" I asked.

"How could I?" replied Tim. "After all, he is my wife's father. She knows nothing of it, I am sure. How can I shame her?"

"There is something of the gentleman about you, notwithstanding, Tim," I said. "And do you still love your wife?"

"I cannot help it," he replied.

"Well, Tim, a wise lawyer's client need never despair. Do you not see that we have the pawnbroker's grip on the old man. I will call and see him this afternoon, and tell him to surrender or take the consequences. Within a day he will lead back your wife to your arms

as meek as Desdemona; and she shall know nothing about it."

And so he did; and Tim is now a happy husband.

MRS. O'RAFFERTY.

THE court-house at Riverhead, Long Island, was crowded. Farmers, forgetful of their uncocked hay, stared eagerly about them.

The case seemed simple enough. Who should be Richard Egerton's administrator?

Egerton was an eccentric young Englishman, who had run away from home, and had lived for some years, off and on, at Patchogue. He had inherited, a few days before his death, a large English estate in Devonshire, which, if he left no children, his brother would inherit. This gentleman, a rector of a small church in London, and a dozen counsel and witnesses, were in the court-room.

"If your brother hadn't left so much personal property here the question need never have arisen," said the English barrister, Mr. Rowley, to the rector. "You could have taken possession of the land and made them come to England to fight."

"It has cost me heavily," said the rector,

sadly. But his face brightened as the evidence began to grow more and more conclusive in his favor.

"I doubt if the conspirators dare make their appearance," whispered the brilliant young American lawyer, Jed. Sexton, to the English barrister. The latter shook his head wisely; not that he knew anything about it, but he had to do something to show his greatness; and besides, whenever he shook his head he charged a pound. It happened that on this occasion he was right, for, in answer to the anxious glances of a young lawyer, who appeared alone on the other side, the door opened, and in pushed a stout woman with a baby in her arms.

"Arrah! get out av the way, ye spalpeens! Will yese be after robbin' the orphan, like English hathen?"

The new-comer kissed the book with a reverential smack, and sat down in the witness-chair. In spite of the Judge's constant commands to look at him, she never took her eyes off the infant, which she had reluctantly confided to the arms of a girl of sixteen.

The objections and interruptions of counsel, the looks and gestures of the witness, the volume and force of her language, that scorned the barriers opposed to it by half a dozen

lawyers, her mixed idiom, her tears and strange oaths and prayers—it would be too long a task to attempt to describe them.

But the main current of her meaning flowed on in a clear stream.

“Bridget O'Rafferty is my name, as your Honor knows well enough, for I've been a-workin' hand and brush among ye this twelve-month—and moighty more work than pay, bad luck to yez all. Who was my father? Didn't I tell your Honor a month ago, when I was clanin' your windows, that my father was Patrick O'Rafferty, and that he lived in County Clare? 'How did he die?' Alanah, how does every honest Irishman die? Wasn't he hanged, your Honor? Didn't the hathen English try to put him off his farm—his farm, d'ye mind, that for five generations he had worked with his own hands? And he was hanged for combing a soldier's hair. Well, yer Honor, the comb had but one tooth, and was shaped scythelike, and he combed the soldier into four pieces, for he was a left-handed barber, and new at the trade, Did I know Richard Eger-ton? I knew him as well as old age knows rheumatism; and I will tell your Honor all that was between him and Bertha Kearney. Who was Bertha Kearney? Must I be turned

into a deaf and dumb by these English spalpeens? Your Honor knows all about Bertha Kearney. But if ye had seen her before grief and care had touched her! No wild flower was half so modest and swate! Since she was *that* high I took care of her; and when she was three years old I worked a month to buy her a sacred heliotrope; and she always wore the cross round her neck. And from a child of beauty she grew up to be a fine young lady, but always wild and wayward. Then her mother died, and her father married a widow; poor man! He was an invalid, and how should ever he hope to stand up against a widow? He hadn't been married a month before all the fight had been knocked out of him. Bertha had now no one to defend her except me, and the poor girl grew melancholy.

"Then there came to our village a young painter lad, so Richard Egerton called himself. And Bertha danced with him and met him at fairs and festivals, more's the pity. I never liked him, though he was handsome to look at, with open eyes and close curled hair. But he was a sportsman and a braggart, and the Irish, as your Honor knows, like the plain truth and no flounces. I begged Bertha to have nothing to do with the soft-spoken Saxon. But a blush

came into her cheek and she laughed, as she said eagerly, 'Will you not always be my friend?' 'Mavourneen!' I answered, 'Whatever you do, right or wrong, God forgive me, I will always be your friend! At this she began to cry, and went away.

"Now, many of the lads in the village—for they were all in love with Bertha—began to look black at the Englishman, and I feared he would take some hurt from them—more's the pity that he didn't. One evening Bertha came to me, pale and trembling. She told me that some of the league heard Dick was a spy, and that she was going to help him escape that night. 'And who knows that he is not a spy?' I asked quickly, 'or who he is, or whether he hasn't made up this story to trap you? And how can you care for a man, who has been your country's enemy for centuries?'

"But Bertha loved him, and I spoke to deaf ears. But I would not leave her, for I misdoubted the Englishman. And how shall I tell what grief I had next? He took Bertha to Paris, and I tried to make her distrust him. But she was in love, and when a woman is in love, she is crazy, your Honor, and should be locked up. Bertha believed every word he said to her, and his promises and excuses, poor

child, Heaven forgive her! And after a few weeks in Paris, he took tickets for America.

"You can rest your hand a bit, your Honor, for my heart bleeds to think how he treated the poor girl, that not a lad in the country would not have given his life to win a glance from. Pass me up your handkerchief, Eliza."

She turned to the girl who held the baby, but before she could use her imaginary handkerchief, an inquiry made by the English attorney to her lawyer reached her ears.

"No marriage in France?" she cried, springing to her feet and glancing fiercely from the English attorney to the rector. "And is it exultin' over the fall of a poor girl ye are, ye whitewashed divils, ye? Some day ye'll be axin' a drop of water from her when she's lanin' on Abraham's bosom. True for you, your Honor, they are not worth dish-washing, and I will go on as straight as a broomstick."

"When we were on the boat I first saw Bertha troubled. She had begun to doubt her lover, and one day on deck I saw her standin' listless, like a lily bent with the rain. 'Mavourneen,' I said to her, 'would it ease your heart, if I were to push him a trifle some even-

ing? They'll not punish me for it in America.' But she shook her head. 'Kate, I am so unhappy,' she said—for, your Honor, what had entered her heart as love had come out as misery. I said nothing to Mr. Egerton, for I knew if Bertha's sweet tongue could not coax justice out of him, no one else could. But I watched him every day. As we neared this country, one morning it began to blow hard. Every hour the wind grew stronger and the waves higher; and that night, wirra! wirra! what a tempest! The ship raced over the foam like a frightened horse, and behind us all the winds! And now one of them would seize the ship by the slack of its breeches, savin' your Honor's presence, and carry us up to where the stars used to be, and then down we went to—the Lord come betune us. The rain poured down so that we couldn't tell on which side the ocean was—up or down; and now and then, with deafening noise, the lightning rent the night pall of our coffin from head to foot. The rudder broke, and the ship rolled in the furrows. When morning dawned a mist clung to us as close as a winding-sheet, and the captain's face was as sober as a judge's. Then came a low, dull roar to the leeward; and a whisper ran over the passengers, who were

huddled together like sheep in a snowstorm, 'The breakers!' Two men fainted, one woman fell down in a fit, and a young French bride shrieked out, 'Monjeur, I shall lose all my clothes.' I stood holding Bertha's hand, and Mr. Egerton beside her. Once I whispered in his ear, 'You are a Jonah,' and he shuddered. Then thump! thump! the boat had struck, and who can tell what followed? What man could do Richard Egerton did, for he was no coward. I clung to Bertha, and a wave swept us on shore, and for a few minutes I was stunned. Then I found myself standing by Bertha; she was kneeling in the wet sand, and before her lay Richard Egerton. He had been struck by a spar; there was no stain of blood upon him; but the spirit of life seemed left only in his hands and eyes. Poor Bertha! her face was as white as your Honor's shirt bosom.

"As I looked at her and at him, an angel whispered to my heart. I bent down. 'Richard Egerton,' I said, 'sure you will never die but once, and you will never again have a chance to right the wrong. Speak an honest word to your sweetheart, that loved you better than her hope of heaven.' His eyes looked wistful, and he tried to speak, but could not. Then I said

to him: 'Make a sign and the Lord will bless it, for you are among a gentle people?' Then he looked about him; and a stick lay near his hand, among the shingle on the beach. He took it, and raising himself by hard effort, traced on the sand the words, 'My Wife.' And when Bertha read them, she gave a great cry of love and anguish. 'My husband!' she faltered, and the wild rose for a moment came back to her cheeks. She took his head upon her knees and covered his face with kisses, and whispered in his ear every sweet word that grows in our happy island. And the look of joy in his eyes scarcely faded away till I closed them; and perhaps God forgave him his sin to her love and prayers, and his repentance."

You could have heard a pin drop in the courtroom.

Then the English rector broke out: "Is it possible that so informal and immoral a connection can be called a marriage in this country?"

"Your Honor," continued Mrs. O'Rafferty, after frantic efforts to get Eliza to pass her a handkerchief, "Bertha died in childbirth. This infant lies here alone in a hostile world of wealth and larnin'. But place over it the shield of the law, and it will defy them all. And may

the Father remember you, as you remember
His little ones."

She rose from her seat. A shout half lifted
the roof from the court-house. Mrs. O'Rafferty
had won her case.

HALF-MOON CLUB.

I HAD made a few thousand dollars trading in cattle at Cheyenne, and had come to New York to spend them.

My father had been a grocer in the latter city before he went to Omaha, and I had always had a fancy for seeing something of New York society.

When I came here I found that the most fashionable hotel was kept by a gentleman who had "killed his man." This fact, to one who had been in the Rockies most of his life, was the best of introductions, and I at once registered my name at Drinkwater's.

As I didn't want to make any bad breaks to get into society, I watched about narrowly in Drinkwater's gorgeous saloon, and in hotel doorways and theaters, where I thought I should be most likely to strike a trail that would lead to big game.

One day I was taking some cold salmon for lunch—the salmon here, by the way, doesn't compare with the land-locked salmon of the Rockies—when a brawny fellow with a fist like

a leg of mutton took a seat beside me, and without a word poured my cocktail down his throat.

They have a strange custom here when a man is insulted of calling in policemen, a sheriff, or, I don't know what, and locking up all hands, so I felt backward about asserting my rights; but when the stranger leaned over the table and whispered: "Order me another cocktail, you ragablash rooster," I forgot that I was in the East, and gave him an honest crack on his red snuff-box.

In reply he rained on my head half a dozen blows that would have knocked in a quartz mine.

I was beginning to begrudge my new acquaintance the pleasure he took in his part in the play, and to berate myself roundly for not being heeled, when, presto! up steps a quiet looking gentleman, with a solitary eye-glass and a pair of kid gloves, and with two or three careless counters makes the ruffian cry "Enough!" and run from the saloon.

I concealed my mortification at the poor figure I had myself cut as best I could, and heartily thanked my friend in need, I begged him, if he had no pressing business, to remain and take lunch with me.

After some urging he looked at his watch, said that he could spare three-quarters of an hour, and sat down.

I had but just given my order when an old beggar woman came into the saloon with some flowers to sell, and I gave her ten cents.

"You are a Western man," said my guest, a smile passing over his face.

"How do you know that?" I asked, a little puzzled.

"The woman knew it," he said. "Didn't you notice that you were the only person in the room whom she asked for money?"

"True," I replied. "I have been half ruined by having to give money to every one I meet here. I never saw a woman begging before I came East."

"You must take care," said my guest. "They are all after it. When in New York, you must sew up your heart and your pocket."

My friend gave me so good advice that, after the first bottle of wine, I grew confidential. I asked him his name, and he handed me his card—"Frederick Remsen." He then wrote "34 St. John's Court" on the card; and, on my inquiring of him what his business was, answered that he was watching the motions of things.

This seemed a good business for a man in my own position, and with Western frankness I told him so. But Mr. Remsen shook his head. "They would beat you out of all your money," he said. "It takes years to learn how to pick the gold fillings out of the teeth of a Wall street shark." Seeing me downcast at this repulse, he added that he had always liked western men, and might help me in other ways.

At this, I told him that father had been a grocer in New York, and had often spoken of the old families; and that I should like to see something of society here; that I could pay my way.

Mr. Remsen thought a moment, and then said:

"My young friend, money, if properly spent, will buy anything, anywhere. I can, perhaps, assist you to your wish; but I have an engagement with Mr. Magnus"—was it the Senator? I wondered—"and I must be off. I will meet you here to-morrow."

He turned and was gone, leaving me impatiently waiting for the next day and the hour of his return, for he had the aristocratic air, and I was sure that he would introduce me to something solid.

Sure enough the next day he reappeared on the

moment, with tickets to a most fashionable ball to which he asked me to go with him.

This I was but too glad to do, and I was well repaid. Never in all my life had I seen so many pretty women and so many graceful dancers. Lace, feathers and gossamer—everything was so light and airy that I could hardly persuade myself that I was not in a thistle-blow heaven.

"This is not society," said Mr. Remsen.

"Not society!" I said. "Why, it seems to me the very tip-top."

Mr. Remsen shook his head.

"Nothing select," he said. "Any one can come here. What a young man of your style wants is to see the exclusives—the old families."

"That's the ticket," I replied. "I want to see the people you don't read about in the papers—the old poltroons."

"The *patroons*!" said Remsen. "My dear boy, that is not so easy. But there are two ways in which it may be done. You must join a fashionable church or club."

I told him that I could not turn hypocrite, and that I should prefer joining a club.

The next day we again met at Drinkwater's.

"Mr. Arnold," said my friend to me, "I

have been thinking over what you said, and I would gladly strain a point to help you."

"I shall never forget your kindness if you will," I said, for my head was full of the pretty girls I had seen last night.

"I fear it will be useless," said Remsen. "I have some influence in a club that one may say without vanity is the most select club in the city; but, in the first place, the fee, I fear, is too high—a thousand dollars."

"Wheugh!" I cried.

"To be sure," he added, "you would be reasonably sure of getting some fat position with a large salary from some of our members, many of whom have a political pull.

"I'll look on it as an investment, not as an initiation fee," I said, after a moment's thought. "I'll join it."

Mr. Remsen did not look over pleased at my announcement.

"There is one thing, Mr. Arnold," he said, hesitatingly. "I don't wish to offend you; but I shall have to be your sponsor, and I must ask you not to speak of your father's having been a grocer. It would hurt me almost as much as you."

I promised, though it made me feel cheap, for I had always been proud of father's having

been a merchant. I then gave Mr. Remsen my credentials, and the name of my banker in Cheyenne.

The next day he told me that he had telegraphed to my banker at Cheyenne, that everything was as it should be, and that very night I was overjoyed at receiving a message from him that there had been but one black ball, and that I had been elected a member of the Half-Moon Club.

There remained nothing except the thousand-dollar fee, the initiation, and, worst of all, a speech which Remsen told me I must make before the club.

Two nights later I put on my dress suit and fastened my diamonds in my shirt. I felt pretty sure there would be few diamonds in the Half-Moon to beat them, for each of my shirt studs cost five hundred dollars, and my sleeve buttons as much again. I felt in my pocket to see that my wad of greenbacks was all right, and after looking in the glass, ran down-stairs, joined Remsen, and jumped into a coach.

We rolled along a quarter of an hour, until we reached a retired house, when we went up-stairs. I found myself in an anteroom, hung with pictures of ladies, each lovelier than the other.

I paid my fee to a secretary who gave me a receipt, and was trying to remember the first sentence of my speech, when I was suddenly blindfolded. Remsen whispered in my ear not to be frightened, which made me smile, for it takes a good deal to frighten a man who had lived in the hostile Sioux country. The next minute I was stripped to my sub-pants and undershirt, and felt some one pinching me. I turned angrily, when I received a slap from a shingle, and in spite of my efforts, I soon began to think I had got into a society of vices and trowels. Each blow was followed by jeers.

“ Warm him ! Schuyler ; ” “ Nip the nipper ! Cruger ; ” “ Fleece him ! William . ”

I tried as well as I could to hold in my temper, and was helped by the words Remsen whispered in my ear.

I soon felt like a ripe pear hung near a sparrow's nest, and hoped the childish prelude was over, when a voice cried out : “ Paint him red ! August , ” and I felt some one daubing my cheeks. Then a new voice shouted out , “ Shave him ! Van , ” and I was seized and my head lathered.

I struggled hard at this, which seemed to pass the bounds of pleasantry when Remsen

whispered: "It is a compliment to the bald heads; don't resist, it will soon be over."

I nerved myself as well as I could, and a razor was passed over my head.

"Put the toga on him, Morgan," said some one, and a robe was thrown over me. Then a torch was placed in my hand.

"Advance to the rostra!" cried the same voice, loudly. "Walk on a few rods," whispered Remsen; "the speech is the end."

I walked forward, holding my torch in my hand, and trying to recall my speech. I passed through a door into what I had no doubt was a hall, the air was so much less oppressive.

"Mount six steps," whispered Remsen. "Don't be afraid; do your best. Your speech may get you a fat appointment."

I mounted the steps and turned round. I had often addressed our town meeting, and had some pride in oratory.

"Gentlemen," I said, in a loud voice, waving my torch, "and ladies—if any of the fair sex are present—I thank you for the warm reception which you have given me—"

I was interrupted by cat-calls, yells and the jeers of boyish voices. These were followed by missiles, hard and soft, that flew around me like hail.

I stood the close of my initiation with as much courtesy as I could, when, bang! what I took to be a rotten egg exploded on my very nose.

This was more than a rustler could stand from a club of emperors. With a growl like a wounded grizzly I flung my torch at the miscreant and tugged at my bandage, which was tied tighter than the marriage knot.

Suddenly my hands were seized, my bandage cut, and, on opening my eyes, I found myself in a night dress, standing on an old music stand in a square, surrounded by a tumult of gutter-snipes and mudlarks. Before me towered two policemen, brandishing their clubs. They at once hauled me to the police station, and showed me my picture in the glass—head shaved, cheeks and nose crimson, and my night dress painted with the most hideous images.

I was so ashamed that I did not know whether to speak or be silent. If the papers got hold of it, where should I hide myself?

Fortunately, the Judge thought me insane, and sent me to Carlton Hospital. There I told my story privately to the doctor, and was soon set at liberty.

I have no doubt that even the bruiser who drank my cocktail was in the plot to rob me.

I should advise any one who wants to get into good society in New York to choose some other light for his steps than that shed by the Half-Moon. Counting my diamonds, my loss was about four thousand dollars.

I now spend a portion of each day watching at the corners of the streets, in the hope of renewing my acquaintance with that descendant of patroons, Mr. Frederick Remsen.

HALF A DOZEN RAW.

MY name is John Moneypenny, and all my life has been spent in New York city.

Destiny impelled me, at the gentle age of twenty-one, to marry a lady a few years older than myself. My wife, whose mother was Greek and whose father was English, was a woman of great beauty, and had a voice as winning as Stradella's prayer.

She doted upon me, and morning and night was never weary of repeating my praises, I had never known any other woman intimately before my wife, whom I had met at Long Branch, and I fear her adoration turned my head.

She lived in her own house in Twentieth street, in this city, and, as I was the only son of one of our wealthiest physicians, we had few wishes that were not gratified.

Except the few facts which my wife told me, I knew nothing and cared less about her past. It was enough for me that I had married a woman whose heart, eyes and lips were the storehouses of love, sunlight and music. I

could only wonder what good fortune had so long reserved for me a priceless jewel, for which so many hands must have eagerly reached.

About a year after our marriage father was seized with a mortal sickness. He received from me such care as I could spare from what I owed my wife, and said to me a short time before his death: "My son, I leave you my money to use for your profit and pleasure; but my library, the fruit of my life's labor, I leave to you in trust for humanity."

I shed a few tears over the coffin of my worthy father; but, alas for the folly of youth! my love for his memory was soon buried in my greater love for the beautiful Carlotta. Extravagant before, it now became my ambition to gratify her every caprice. With one hand I scattered roses around her feet, and with the other filled her lap with gems.

Love and business made a sorry team, and after a few months most of my father's hard-caught eagles had flown away from their old eyrie. In casting about how to obtain more money, it occurred to me that I might sell my father's library, which, since his death, had been stored in my uncle's stable. But I dismissed the idea as unworthy even of so unworthy a son as myself.

One afternoon I had just left the house when I remembered that I had left my watch, whose crystal I had broken, in the upper drawer of my wife's bureau. Wishing to have it mended, I reopened the front door, and went up-stairs. It was my wife's custom to take a siesta; and, eager not to wake her, I stole softly toward her door, which was on a crack, and pushed it open.

I was about to enter, when, glancing at a mirror at one end of the room, I saw my wife standing with her face toward the opposite wall.

I started back in surprise. The tapestry had been unhooked, and behind it yawned the open mouth of a small safe. My wife had taken a bundle of letters from the safe and was gazing at them with strange eyes.

For the first time in my life I was seized with a pang of jealousy. Hardly knowing what I did, I closed the door and stole noiselessly downstairs.

The very next day another discordant note was struck in our marriage duet. My wife had a favorite greyhound that she cherished next to her husband. The dog that morning received an ugly wound from the spikes on the barbed wire fence in the park, that marred his beauty, and Carlotta had him killed.

The next evening we went to see "Hamlet." By what unknown threads are we led into and out of the labyrinth of life! When I heard the words, "Methinks the lady doth protest too much," a feeling came over me which I cannot describe. I loved my wife as much as ever; but a horrible doubt seemed to pry into every word and action, and into every silence that had made up our happy life.

A jealous curiosity seized me: the child of love swallowed up its parent.

The next day I waited impatiently till Carlotta had left the house to pay a visit in Brooklyn. I then hastened to a locksmith, and bade him as quickly as possible open my wife's hidden safe. This, I felt sure, contained an answer to all the questions a husband could wish to ask.

The safe was soon deftly opened, and I pried into its contents. There were handfuls of diamonds of great brilliancy, but I scarcely looked at them, so intent was I on bundles of letters, which were carefully placed on shelves. These letters I devoured with the avidity with which a rat eats phosphorus. I received far more light than the poor rodent gets from his meal; but the effect on me was almost equally fatal.

Carlotta, to whom before our marriage the mere whisper of anything less sacred than the life of a cloistered nun had almost seemed a desecration, was the relict of five husbands, all of whose love letters she had carefully preserved!

I replaced everything in the safe, rehung the tapestry, and reeled from the room like a drunken man.

I wept, I laughed, I muttered strange things to myself, I heard strange whispers in my ears.

Five husbands at her age—she must, indeed, be a deadly taking! Did they die at all, and how? Is it not all a dream? Why had Carlotta never spoken a word to me of her past life? I loved her still, but my love was riddled through with horrors.

I went forth, not knowing whither to direct my steps. After wandering about for an hour or more, I found myself by chance standing before the door of my uncle's stable.

For the first time since father's death, I felt remorse at having so little heeded his counsel. I resolved that very day, before I should again be tempted to sell his library, to present his books and manuscripts to the Bellevue Hospital.

I entered the stable and went upstairs.

There were a score of bookcases filled with rare medical works. I opened one, took out a volume, and glanced over it ; its pages were blank ; I took up a second and a third—still blank. “Oh, day of wonders !” I said to myself. “I open the blank book of my wife’s mind and I find it closely written over by I know not how many husbands. I open the volumes of my father’s library, and they are vestals.”

Urged by a new curiosity, I went through every book in the bookcase and found their leaves all blank ; a second bookcase left me no wiser than the first. I kept on, but had almost given up my search in despair, when I saw one book that had no title on its back. I turned over its leaves and in the center of the book found in my father’s handwriting these words :

“Feet warm, head cool, bowels free.”

These words, in my strange excitement, seemed to speak to me with the very voice of my father. I replaced the book on the shelf and walked away from the stable. My head was a ball of fire ; but a walk through the Park somewhat composed my mind.

I have something of the superstition of the Orient about me, and can never break bread with any one of whose friendship I have a

doubt. I resolved never to eat at my wife's table again. But my curiosity and a wish to be just to her, would not let me leave her without a word.

"To-night," I thought, "and to-morrow I will watch her. Perhaps she will herself give me the cue to speak to."

I returned home; Carlotta scolded me for being so late, and herself prepared supper for me.

Unobserved by her, I threw the solids to the dog and cat, and the liquid into the tea-pot.

Carlotta that evening sang to me her sweetest songs; then, saying she was tired, she bade me good-night and went up-stairs. Her words and finger-tips lingered in my ears and on my hands.

Soon after I went to my room, which was next to hers. My father's words, I know not why, seemed to be ringing in my ears and forbade me to sleep. My temples were burning, my feet cold. I piled blankets on the foot of my bed. I had had a cold for a fortnight; the doctor had given me I know not what villainous compounds that had seemed to make me worse.

To-night my nerves seemed to be all trying to stand on tip-toe. As often as I thought of

sleeping I seemed to hear my father's wise voice speaking to me : " Feet warm, head cool." " I'll kick all the doctors out of our house to-morrow," I thought. Our house ! Alas ! what had I in common with her whom I had loved ?

I now began to feel a strange craving for something I knew not what ; it resembled what I had read of the thirst of habitual drunkards—but it could not be that, for I was the extreme of temperate.

I turned my head toward the door and closed my eyes. I may have dozed a few minutes at a time, but not more, for I heard the clock strike quarter and half hours till midnight.

Suddenly my ear caught a sound in my wife's room ; a step was stealing toward my door. I lay in the shadow and could watch unseen.

A cold sweat bathed my limbs as I heard the mouse-like tread approach nearer. Horrible fancies swarmed around my brain. Clytemnestra ! Lady Macbeth ! I half expected to see my wife creeping toward me, dagger in hand.

As she glided into the room with her pale face my heart beat so that I wondered that it did not betray me. She drew close to my bedside ; I could feel that she was looking at me. I wanted to open my eyes, to cry out, to clasp

Carlotta to my arms and again receive her heart within my own.

I was about to yield to this impulse, when I distinctly heard my father's words whispered in my ear, "Feet warm; head cool."

At these words, strangely enough, my desire failed. I lay spell-bound, as though enchanted—as silent as a dead town crier.

After a few moments I heard my wife whisper:

"Poor Jack, your year is well-nigh spent: you have lived and loved; you have been faithful and happy; but no man is to be trusted for more than a year; I commit you to Heaven's keeping.

The next minute I felt a light touch remove the blankets and clothes from my feet and leave them exposed to the winter air.

Having accomplished her task, Carlotta's light step glided back over the floor. She was gone; I opened my eyes, and sat up in my coffin. I looked about me: "Ah!" I thought bitterly, it was the first idea that came into my head, "I see now why of late you have insisted on having fresh air."

I realized what the craving I had felt without knowing it was. I had been taking opium, and last night had omitted the dose. The

words I had heard whispered in my ears were uttered by phantoms that the same drug had conjured up.

And she, my wife! What a storm swept over me at the thought of her! She, for whose whim I would have laid down my life!—it seemed a different matter when she undertook to take my life to gratify her own fancy.

“Five and a half times a widow,” I muttered; “you shall not make up the fraction from me, you fiend!”

I thought of strangling her where she lay, but my love for her paralyzed my hand.

I rose, dressed myself as softly as possible, and stole into her room. She was sleeping; her hair lay in lovely plight about her shapely head and a white arm framed her chiseled face. I drew a breath between my teeth; with a stealthy hand I bared her feet and stole away from the room and the house.

My pride would have hushed up the matter, but a sense of duty forbade it.

I gave the story to the press. A few papers believed me; most of them doubted me and called me a fool and a miscreant; all published the news.

My wife disappeared. I have never seen her since. I learned that when last seen she was

in company with the handsomest young man of our acquaintance, who has also vanished.

Some of my friends said she was insane, but there was certainly the method of Malthus in her madness. From an expression in one of her letters which at the time I did not understand, I think she was a disciple of the creed of the Albanians.

The wisest of this sect divide mankind into two classes, "raw and cooked souls." Raw souls should abide by certain forms and laws, but to the "cooked souls," to which a raw soul is a mere vassal, all things are permitted. Carlotta was a cooked soul ; but I myself am no longer wholly raw.

ILDRA.

CHAPTER I.

SOUTHEAST of Obeid, one of the provincial capitals of Soudan, and southwest of Khartoum, a few months since a small caravan was creeping over the sandy wastes, in the direction of the latter city.

It consisted of two Bedouins, or Arabs of the desert ; a stalwart young man, evidently of English stock ; a negro, one of the aboriginal tribes of Soudan, and two girls about eighteen years of age. Each of the travelers was mounted on a camel, and, though the heat was intense, there were no signs of a halt.

One of the young women was clearly the sister of the pale-face, but the complexion and figure of the other showed her to belong to one of those desert tribes that still preserve somewhat the chaste language of the prophet. Though her cheeks were not like roses, in other marks she was worthy of the praises that East-

ern poets have made familiar to us. Her bust was high, her waist slender, her arched eyebrows joined, her eyes and hair were as black as the night of a disappointed lover, and her mouth as red as Solomon's seal.

"May the desert swallow up our pursuers, Enis," she said to her companion, as she drew hard on the rein of her camel, that was straining its head toward a dried-up river course.

"You wish them a fearful fate, Ildra, that may yet be our own," answered Enis.

The caravan was one of many that were hastening from all parts of Soudan on account of the first half-successful revolt of El Mahdi, the False Prophet.

The father of the young man, an erratic Englishman named Mason, many years ago had gone to the Soudan to study botany. While there he had married the daughter of a small sheikh, by whom he had two children, George and Enis. George had been sent to England to school, and had just returned, when a series of misfortunes, that had fallen on his family, culminated in the death of both parents and the danger of his sister's capture.

Hadji Achmet, a neighboring sheikh of great power, had long been his father's enemy. Mr.

Mason had been the means of setting free two Mohammedan girls, whom Achmet had enslaved against the law, and the rich slaver never forgave him. Achmet had joined El Mahdi and was now in a position to attempt his revenge.

On the very day set for his father's funeral George had received word through the blacks, whose defender his father had been, that Achmet was preparing to attack him and carry off his sister.

A brief prayer over his father's coffin, and George, with the three servants, who remained faithful to him, had fled.

But who is Ildra, the girl whose camel follows his sister's?

The daughter of a poor sheikh who had been killed in a feud, she had been stolen by a slave-dealer and would have been carried to Egypt, had not Mr. Mason bought her for a bolt of calico. She was old enough to remember his freeing her, and savage enough to repay his kindness with the deepest gratitude.

The sun now grew hotter and hotter, but still, though the long, swinging gait of the camels grew slower, the caravan kept on its way. Few words were spoken, and there was little to attract the eye. They were passing

through a vast, undulating, sandy waste, at times open, at times covered with tall yellow grass and scrub trees.

"I wish the Nile would drown this whole country, fleas, negroes, slave-dealers, hyenas and all," said George, turning to his sister; "I am sick of this horrid desert. Curse on Gladstone and his Egyptian policy. I wish that he were where he had to ride forty miles to get a drop of water."

As George spoke, Ildra gave a low sigh. "Alas!" she thought, "he has not a word or a glance for me. I am less to him than his camel or his servant."

"Twelve hours more and we are safe in Khartoum," continued George, more cheerfully. "We must be near the well, if Hassan is not wrong."

"It is there," said Ildra, pointing somewhat to the left, and soon the less acute nostrils of her comrades began to perceive a more and more offensive smell, which rose from a small hole, holding a few pails of black water and surrounded by bones of horses and camels and by the numerous skeletons of slaves, who had crawled there to die. The well is famous far and wide as cistern and bath.

"A hog wouldn't step in it in England,"

cried George, in disgust. "There is scarce water enough for one camel."

The Arab servants, however, at once knelt down and began lapping up the lees.

"And food!" said George; "meat will not keep an hour in this sun. I wish, Enis," turning to his sister, "that you had some of those turkeys that fly about the Mohammedan paradise, boiled on one side and roasted on the other."

"He thinks nothing of the poor Arab girl," thought Ildra, with a blush that forced its way through her dark skin.

"Look!" she cried, in a tone that sent a thrill of horror through her hearers. They looked, but saw nothing; but they knew her meaning, and pricked forward the tired camels, fearful each moment that they would lie down on the sand and refuse to stir.

And now, far away on the edge of the horizon, they saw a gray speck that grew larger, then divided, and again divided. Was it one of the bands which they had been told Hadji Achmet would send to capture his enemy's daughter? Who could doubt it?"

"They are mounted on dromedaries," said Ildra in a low tone. "They are gaining upon us."

The face of the young man grew sterner. Every now and then his hand sought his pistol belt. He looked at his sister, in whose face was a look of mingled courage and despair.

"He has not a glance or a word of pity for me," again thought Ildra bitterly.

Now and then they met two or three Gellahbas, or small slave dealers, upon donkeys, on their way to Darfour.

But the fugitives took no heed of country or people. Before them they saw nothing but the hope of gaining Khartoum, behind them nothing but the fear of the hostile Bedouins; and the hope waned and the fear waxed. With every knoll they could now see their pursuers more and more clearly; there were twenty or thirty of them, armed with spears with broad blades and carrying quivers full of assegais.

They were mounted, not on dromedaries, as Ildra had supposed, but on horses of equal speed and bottom.

"A few more miles and it is all over," whispered George, and turned his face from his sister. "You shall be avenged," he muttered to himself; "but what is revenge on such wretches?"

The enemy were now within a few hundred

yards of them. George raised his revolver and uttered a few words of low agony and prayer; his sister averted her head. He lowered his hand; his sister entreated him to fire. Again he slowly raised his hand. Whether he would have carried out his purpose, we cannot tell; for at that moment Ildra, riding forward, struck up his weapon.

"Not yet!" she said, with a tone of command. "Enis, veil yourself; they do not know you. Ride on as fast as you can, to the woods. Lead!" she cried to George; "your camel has most strength left."

George urged on his camel, and the rest followed. Before them was a thorny grove; could he reach that, with his revolver he might yet keep the thieves at bay and save his sister. But Ildra silently checked her own camel, who trotted behind the rest, and turned its head toward the pursuers.

"What do you seek?" she asked them.

"The daughter of the Englishman."

"I am she."

As she spoke, she drew a pistol from her girdle.

"We will capture the other woman, too," cried one of the band.

"She is his son's wife," said Ildra, "and he

is a true Mussulman. Invade not his house, or the evil eye will wither you joint and limb."

She knew the superstition of her people.

"Sheikh Achmet told us to bring the daughter," said the more timid of the band. "Go with us, and we will let the others off."

Ildra turned; a strange feeling thrilled her. George, who had now first learnt of her desertion, was riding toward them, revolver in hand.

She waved him away. A Bedouin seized her camel's rein, and she was soon rapidly riding back across the desert. They would have bound her, but she said to them quietly: "I go of my own wish; why should you bind me?" From time to time she turned her head.

George, finding pursuit in vain, had rejoined his party and disappeared over the rim of the horizon.

Ildra, as the gray speck vanished, heaved a deep sigh. "He will remember me," she said. "That hope alone lies between me and the grave."

She drew her pistol furtively from her girdle; her manner had been so quiet that her captors had not disarmed her. She looked at the weapon for a moment; then a look of fierce

hate passed over her face, and she threw it on the ground. One of the Arabs stopped and picked it up. As the pistol touched the ground, did Sheikh Achmet feel no sensation in his distant camp?

CHAPTER II.

ON and on through the silence of the desert sped Ildra. Beside her rode the demon of despair and the angel of self-sacrifice. Swiftly all things glided past her. She heeded them not. A herd of dog-faced baboons, with manes like tippets, sat and chattered as she rode by. Two buffaloes broke from a covert. A wild goat, perching like a sentinel upon a rock, warned the flock beneath him of their danger. A swarm of vultures flew away from the carcass of a slave and flapped their wings above Ildra's head. Next a party of slaves bound for Abyssinia, with huge waists, caused by feeding on grass, were driven by her. A league behind them were a party of traders in ivory and ostrich feathers, who had with them two women of the famous tribe of pigmies.

Strange, Ildra, saw all and nothing—so

mysterious is the effect of intense feeling on the senses.

After traveling twenty-eight hours they reached Achmet's palace, for in that desolate region any dwelling above a straw hut is a palace.

A thrill of hope ran for a moment through Ildra's bosom, when she learned that Achmet had not yet returned from the army of the False Prophet.

All night, despite her fatigue, she lay awake praying heaven to succor her. The barking of hyenas and the distant growl of lion or panther answered her prayers.

Poor, poor Ildra! What agony she suffered the next morning, listening to the praise of the great sheikh from his wrinkled relatives. Did he not own a well—the only well within fifty miles that was not dry more than six months in the year? Did he not own a hundred huge fig trees whose trunks had been hollowed into cisterns, filled with water and sealed up against the drought? Ought not any woman to be proud to be his slave?—for, of course, so common a girl as Ildra could not hope to be his wife. In a few days he would be back from El Mah-di's army to sow seed, and then Ildra would be happy.

Ildra made no answer to these cruel taunts,

prompted by that malignant jealousy with which, in all countries, the old and homely pursue the young and fair.

The fifth evening there was a stir in the house. Thirty or forty horsemen rode up, with the sheikh at their head. He dismounted, and, in a few words, gave his orders to his followers. He was in ill humor, it was clear; but when he learned that the daughter of his enemy was in his power, his fierce, crafty and passionate eyes gave a look of triumph. He cast one glance at Ildra, and no more. But after he had eaten, she was led before him. He had expected to find her sullen, but her face was wreathed with smiles. She folded one hand over the other, and asked what were her lord's commands. She filled his Turkish pipe for him, and poured from a bottle forbidden to the Faithful a brimming glass. She had heard of his prowess in war—that he was the sword of El Mahdi, and that he would drive the dogs of English from their country. Her mother was an Arab, and she hated the tyrants. The old man told her in how many battles he had been, and how many infidels he had slain. Under the wine and her flattery he thought himself young again. He showed her his jeweled cimeter. She shut her eyes before it. She would not

touch it. What a great warrior! Would not his sword kill of its own accord?

"But look!" she said, turning toward the door, "who comes to interrupt us?"

Achmet turned his head in anger. It was death for a slave to intrude on his privacy.

In a moment Ildra had snatched the cimeter from the cushion on which they were seated, and drawn its sharp edge along the left side of his throat. So keen was the blade and so true her hand that the sheikh's head was half severed from his body. He sank without a word on the cushion.

Ildra rose, drew back and looked at her victim without a shudder or tear. She then withdrew herself to a corner of the room. Any hope of escape was useless. She sat alone with the deed and the dead. Though for eight years she had lived with a Christian family, her blood and childhood were more potent. She was again all Arab. Swaying backward and forward, she repeated scraps of passages from the Koran: "There is no strength nor power but in Allah the High, the Great." Once or twice she smiled; it was when she thought of the man she loved riding after her. "He will not forget me," she said. Then she sat silent and impassive as a sphinx.

She had no longer part or portion with the living. A scorpion, which the windy night had driven from its hole, ran across her arm. She did not move. Pleasure and pain, hope and fear, life and death, were one with her.

Night began to yield to twilight. Servants were stirring about the house. A drum called the soldiers from their slumbers. Ildra heard steps approaching the door; persons listened and returned. No one dared disturb the slumbers of the great sheikh.

Hark! there is a wild uproar; angry voices; men threatening; women's shrill debate. Whose voice is it she hears? The next moment the door is flung open. George rushes into the room followed by a comrade and a host of the sheikh's relatives and soldiers.

At sight of the dead sheikh, every voice is hushed for a moment. Then a wail breaks forth from the women, and some of the sheikh's followers draw their weapons.

But the two newcomers place themselves before Ildra.

"Come," said George, and, pistol in hand, her two friends lead her through the wailing foes.

Mounting her upon a camel they ride rapidly away, and a league or more from the village

come upon a troop of fifty men, who receive them with cheers.

A week later George and Ildra were married in the small sandstone church of the Austrian Mission, at senna-bearing Khartoum.

FINIS.

